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JEWISH HISTORY AND POLITICS

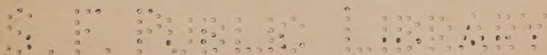
IN THE TIMES OF SARGON AND
SENNACHERIB

An Inquiry

INTO THE HISTORICAL MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE PROPHECIES
OF ISAIAH

BY SIR EDWARD STRACHEY, BART.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED, WITH ADDITIONS



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Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence ; statistis indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem ;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat ;
These only with our Law best form a king.

Paradise Regained, iv. 353.

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PREFACE.

IT is now many years ago that, by the advice of my friend Mr. MAURICE, I proposed to myself to make the science of Politics my study. In order to give Jewish History and Politics their proper place in that study I chose the period of which this Volume treats; and the reader is here offered the results of my inquiry. The present edition has been revised throughout, and considerable additions have been made to it.

This period—the last half of the eighth century B.C.—is of characteristic importance in the history of the Jewish nation, which had now reached its highest point of civilization, and was come into contact with the Assyrian Power, which was overwhelming the Eastern world. Its social and religious condition, and its politics, home and foreign, are known to us through the contemporary discourses of the Prophets, the political and religious advisers of the kings and people. A new and interesting light is thrown upon it by the Assyrian Inscriptions, which show us, as facts, many events and circumstances of which, without them, we could only infer the existence. And the genius of Isaiah, the greatest of the prophets of that or any time, has called out a series of learned and thoughtful commentaries on his writings, such as are hardly available for the student of any other book.

Taking then each of Isaiah's prophecies in succession, I have brought it into connection with all that we know, from itself, or from other sources, of the events to which it refers, as well as of the internal state of the nation, and of its relations with other countries. And thus I have endeavoured, in a manner which should not be the less complete because it is gradual and somewhat informal, to take in the whole subject proposed in my title-page.

In thus reading the Book of Isaiah I have, to the best of my ability, handled it by the method of our modern historians of Greece and Rome, and treated it as they—with thorough freedom and thorough reverence—treat the classical books. Wherever the method led I have followed; and if I have found differences as well as resemblances between the Jewish and the classical literatures, this is not the consequence of a difference of method, but of facts. Thus, I have recognized, for I should think it unscientific criticism not to recognize, the fact that, while no one now worships the national gods of Greece or Rome, a large part of the most educated and most thoughtful men in modern Europe still believe in, and worship the national God of the Jews. And again:—the Jewish, the Greek, and the Roman histories all tell us of national growth and national decay. The patriots and the philosophers of Greece and Rome could find no remedy for the decay: they admitted at last that there was nothing left for the state but military despotism, and nothing in religion but an organized superstition without faith—which indeed would do nothing towards restoring the life of the nation, but might make its inevitable death more gradual, or less convulsive, than if they continued to try successive forms of anarchy in the hope of regaining freedom. But the Jewish teachers maintained that there was a law of national life powerful enough to control and

reverse the action of the law of death ; and that it would eventually assert and establish itself, if not in the Jewish nation yet in future times and other nations. And this belief of the ancient Jew is still held by many a modern political philosopher and practical statesman : which fact, and what it involves, I have also recognized.

The Text of Isaiah—the Authorized Version revised—is given at the end of the Volume. The question of the Authorship of the Book I have treated at some length. I consider it to be still far from settled, and that it needs more and other discussion than it has yet received.

Of the Assyrian Inscriptions of the period under consideration I have given, in the proper places, all that is yet translated, and that is of importance to my subject.

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JEWISH HISTORY AND POLITICS.

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THE GREEK ORATOR.—THE HEBREW PROPHET.—THE MODERN PREACHER.—
SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.—THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.—ITS ARRANGEMENT—
ITS UNITY.—HYPOTHETICAL AND POSITIVE CRITICISM.

THE Spartan king told Xerxes that he was no match for the Greeks, 'because they, though free, had a master—the law—over them, which they feared more than the Persians did his despotic will.' And the Athenian orator, looking back on the great struggle after a generation or two had passed, gave his countrymen a farther explanation of their fathers' success 'against the barbarian myriads of the king of Asia :' he pointed out how 'they had done such noble and wonderful deeds, because they were already organized into a free commonwealth in which the good were honoured, and the bad restrained, by law ; because they knew and held that it should be left to brute beasts to control each other by mutual violence, such as oriental kings and subjects lived by, but that it became men to define rights by law, to persuade to its maintenance or expansion by rational and instructive speech, and in their conduct to follow the guidance of both these,—the law their king, and speech their teacher.'

The orator enunciated an eternal truth. Had it been less than eternal, it could not be still keeping its ground, and still sustaining the life of every nation which holds to it, or indeed, although we (not to judge of others) hold never

so imperfectly to it : for though we are ready enough to thank God that we English are not as other men, we might more reasonably reflect how often we are all on the verge of doing what lies in us to disturb the perfect play of those two forces, of entire obedience to the law and absolute right of discussion, according as either may check some private opinion or class interest ; and how seldom we remember that one step beyond that verge lies the region of mutual violence with the correlates of despotism and insurrection in which *its* vitality consists. But this truth, this universal law of human society, has not only outlasted the politics of Greece, but was not first discovered there, as the Athenians supposed ; nor was the exercise of this master right and power of words ‘so originally and peculiarly the possession of Greeks alone among all living creatures, that’ (as their panegyrist goes on to say) ‘if any other people did acquire it from them, this only extended the name of Grecian to distinctions of mind as well as race, so that they were called by it who shared their education rather than those who had their blood.’ Another people had been set, many centuries earlier, to work out some of the same, with some very different, problems of human society, and under not wholly dissimilar conditions, internal and external : and while the Hebrew as well as the Greek could have pointed to various other proofs that his was a commonwealth, or constitutionally organized body-politic, as distinguished from the inorganic despotisms of Assyria or Persia, the one fixed on the same marks as the other did, as the characteristic ones : the ‘Nomos and Logos’ of the Greek were anticipated by their true counterparts the ‘Law and the Prophets’ of the Hebrew.*

* Since this was published in 1853, it has received the support of a not dissimilar view of the position of the Hebrew Prophets by Mr. Mill. He says :—‘The Egyptian hierarchy, the paternal despotism of China, were very fit instruments for carrying those nations up to the point of civilization which they attained. But having reached that point they were brought to a permanent halt for want of mental liberty and individuality,—requisites of improvement which the institutions that had carried them thus far entirely incapacitated them from acquiring ; and as the institutions did not break down and give place to others, further improvement stopped. In contrast with these nations, let us consider the example of an opposite character, afforded by another and a comparatively insignificant Oriental people—the

Isaiah, no less than Demosthenes, might have said that it was the office of the political speaker and adviser, 'to see events in their beginnings, to discern their purport and tendencies from the first, and to forewarn his countrymen accordingly; to confine within the narrowest bounds those political vices of habitual procrastination, supineness, ignorance, and love of strife, which are inevitable in all states; and to dispose men's minds instead to enlightened concord and unanimity, and to the zealous discharge of their social duties:' and he too might have added, 'All these things have I done, and no creature can say that I have ever left any of them undone; I do not shrink from your scrutiny, be it never so strict.'* But there were

Jews. They, too, had an absolute monarchy and a hierarchy. These did for them what was done for other Oriental races by their institutions—subdued them to industry and order, and gave them a national life. But neither their kings nor their priests ever obtained, as in those other countries, the exclusive moulding of their character. Their religion gave existence to an inestimably precious unorganized institution—the *Order* (if it may be so termed) of Prophets. Under the protection, generally though not always effectual, of their sacred character, the Prophets were a power in the nation, often more than a match for kings and priests, and kept up, in that little corner of the earth, the antagonism of influences which is the only real security for continued progress. Religion consequently was not there—what it has been in so many other places—a consecration of all that was once established, and a barrier against further improvement. The remark of a distinguished Hebrew, that the Prophets were in Church and State the equivalent of the modern liberty of the press, gives a just but not an adequate conception of the part fulfilled in national and universal history by this great element of Jewish life; by means of which, the canon of inspiration never being complete, the persons most eminent in genius and moral feeling could not only denounce as reprobate, with the direct authority of the Almighty, whatever appeared to them deserving of such treatment, but could give forth better and higher interpretations of the national religion, which thenceforth became part of the religion. Accordingly, whoever can divest himself of the habit of reading the Bible as if it was one book, which until lately was equally inveterate in Christians and in unbelievers, sees with admiration the vast interval between the morality and religion of the Pentateuch, or even of the historical books, and the morality and religion of the Prophecies, a distance as wide as between these last and the Gospels. Conditions more favourable to progress could not easily exist; accordingly, the Jews, instead of being stationary, like other Asiatics, were, next to the Greeks, the most progressive people of antiquity, and, jointly with them, have been the starting-point and main propelling agency of modern cultivation.'—*Representative Government*, by John Stuart Mill, pp. 41, 42.

* Demosthenes, *de Coronâ*, c. 73. This, and the preceding passages from Herodotus (vii. 104), Lysias (ii. 17–20), and Isocrates (iv. 53–56), are pointed out as characteristic of the political life of Greece, by Mr. Grote: *History*, vii. 498, ix. 116. I need hardly remind the reader that the greatness of ancient Rome, too, stood not in her laws alone, but in her laws and her free speech together; the tribune had as large a share as the senator in building up the Republic.

differences as well as resemblances between the orator and the prophet, and we must look for further illustrations elsewhere.

The history of England, as of other nations of Christendom, shows us in the political constitution of the state an incorporated and endowed body of men called the clergy, or spirituality, with the business of caring for all those interests of the nation which did not fall under the heads of trade, agriculture, war, or domestic and feudal (that is, patriarchal) government; who practised the more difficult branches of medicine, law, and statesmanship; who bestowed a religious consecration on all states of national, family, and personal life—delivering the crown and sceptre to the sovereign in trust from the King of kings, joining the hands of man and wife in the name of God, and enrolling as a citizen the babe who had just before been received into the congregation; who claimed the right, and acknowledged the duty, of educating each member of the nation to apprehend his privileges and obligations, not only as a citizen but as a man, and of teaching him that his greatest dignity and happiness, and his highest relations with his fellow-men and with God, belonged to him as a man, and would be his in proportion as this, his proper humanity, was renewed in him: and who rescued one day in each week from work and trade, devoting it to rest, recreation, and public worship, and thus provided the opportunity and means for keeping up that consecration of the nation, and for carrying on that education and civilization of the people. And in the history of the Hebrew nation, we can trace the rudimental, though often rude and imperfect, counterparts of this European spirituality, of which, indeed, it was in many respects the origin and model. And though decay and growth have conspired to efface many of the original characteristics of the ‘Church of England,’ and to provide other means for the execution of many of its old functions, it is still not only the best, but a thoroughly effective illustration of the analogous ‘estate of the realm’ of Israel, provided that we avoid that bondage in which analogies and illustrations are mistaken for arguments, and keep before us the fact that each nation has

ever had its own character, institutions, and history, and must be understood and judged of in itself; and this the more as it is remote in time and place from those with which we compare it.

To the Tribe of Levi, then, the Mosaic constitution gave special functions in the state, and distributed them over the land for their performance. They were to carry on the sacrifices and other services of the Tabernacle or Temple; to conduct the local worship of Jehovah; to assist in, and give a religious sanction to, all the main proceedings of the nation and its kings; to instruct the people in the law,—for which end they had the tithes allotted to them, that they might reside in every part of the country when their turn was past for attending at the temple; to keep the genealogies and other records of the state; and to administer what we should now call its sanitary code. I include the local worship of Jehovah among their functions; for though the Jewish historians and interpreters of the law—writing when the restriction of that worship to Jerusalem seemed the only means of rooting out the old local idolatries, and when the diminution of the extent and population of the kingdom made such restriction practicable—often condemn the worship of Jehovah in ‘the High Places,’ through the land as a corruption of the faith, yet they have given us a multitude of facts* which show that it did long prevail with the sanction of judges, prophets, and kings. It was supported by patriarchal practice and tradition, by the Mosaic constitution, and by its own reasonableness if only it could be prevented from degenerating into idolatry; and, notwithstanding its corruptions, it helped to form the national character, so religious in spirit and not merely in forms, and of which we see one of the final developments in the organization of the synagogues all over the country in later times. And out of this spirituality, or order of clergy, grew the institution and order of PROPHETS, or

* Gen. xii. 7, 8; xxviii. 18; xxxi. 54. Judges vi. 24 ff.; xiii. 16 ff.; xvii. 7 ff. 1 Sam. vii. 9, 17; x. 3, 8; xiii. 8, 9; xiv. 34, 35; xvi. 5. 1 Kings iii. 2 ff.; xviii. 30. 2 Kings xii. 3; xiv. 4; xv. 4, 34, 35; xviii. 4; xxiii. 5, 9. 1 Chron. xxi. 26. 2 Chron. xv. 17. Psal. lxxiv. 8. It has been suggested that Rabshakeh (Isa. xxxvi. 7), appealed to a discontented faction who opposed the suppression of the worship of Jehovah in the High Places.

preachers, educated in colleges or schools of the Prophets. Such colleges existed at Ramah, Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and Jerusalem ; there was a president or 'father,' in which office we find Samuel and Elisha ; and his disciples and associates, who bore the names of 'sons of the prophets,' lived with him in a common habitation, and shared a common table. We are told that they 'prophesied with the psaltery, tabret, pipe, and harp : ' their writings show them to have been students, nay masters, of poetry, rhetoric, and philosophy, as well as of music ; and they were historians, though only brief abstracts of their historical works survive : practical, no less than speculative and literary, politicians, they show themselves educated to the use of the mental and moral powers which were required for advising their kings, at home and in foreign affairs ; and—what belonged to a still higher training—for advising and directing the people how to resist those kings when the latter set the constitution deliberately at nought, and yet not fall into the same guilt themselves. There seems reason to suppose that kings and princes were, when they pleased, educated in these schools, as well as the prophets. It was eminently a national education : in the Psalms, Prophets, and other Scriptures of the Old (nay, of the New) Testament, we see its results, extending through the whole life of the nation for 1500 years : in the Pentateuch we see how its foundations were laid by the great Hebrew legislator, in furtherance of his design, that all nations should have cause to say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people ; ' and in the historical notices, brief as they are, of these schools of the prophets, we have sufficient evidence of an instrument adequate to connect the design and the results. But though regular education was not less, neither was it more, important in the Hebrew than in other nations. The prophet Amos says, 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son ; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit : and Jehovah took me as I followed the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.' And no doubt this was not the only instance in a body of whom

one of the characteristic features was that they should not belong exclusively to any one tribe, or rank, or profession, and that each should 'speak as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.' Yet here as elsewhere the settled institutions of the country will have exercised their due influence in forming the character even of those individuals who did not come into immediate contact with them. And while we may pursue our illustration by comparing the schools of the prophets with the monasteries and colleges which have hitherto sent out most, if not all, the great prophets of Christendom, as well as the multitude of ordinary teachers, we shall find a real and instructive resemblance between these and the Hebrew prophets. The sermons and other discourses of a Latimer at Paul's Cross, of a Luther at the Diet of Worms, of a Knox before the Popish queen and nobles, or of a Savonarola in Florence ; the field-preachings of a Wesley or Whitfield ; and, within narrower limits, the orations of a Burke in defence of justice, laws, institutions ;—these, taken with the lives and acts, and, where need was, the deaths of the men, are the true counterparts of what Isaiah and the rest of the Hebrew prophets said, did, or suffered.

The prophets warned, threatened, and denounced, as well as advised and encouraged, the king or the people, as the occasion required : and the student of their writings has no more difficulty in connecting their discourses with the events of their own times than is reasonably explained by the imperfection of the historical records which remain to us of those events. Whatever else the prophets were, they were the political advisers and guides of their nation, in the maintenance and development, through constant struggles, of constitutional government—government by law, and not by arbitrary will. Samuel was the last of the judges, as well as the first of the prophets, and it may not be possible to distinguish completely between the two functions in considering his acts. Still it would seem that it was in his capacity of prophet that he first tried to induce the people over whom he exercised so deservedly great an influence, to abandon their desire for a king, and to continue in the old paths of the commonwealth : when

they insisted, he chose and anointed a king; and when that king treated the constitution and laws with a disregard which was not the less serious because the instances recorded may seem of no great importance to us, Samuel took steps—treasonable steps the pedant might call them—for saving the nation and its future life, by advising and sanctioning a change of dynasty. Let us ask ourselves whether the Jewish nation would have played any part as a ‘main propelling agency of modern cultivation,’ if its monarchy had been allowed to take the form which Saul would have given it, if he had made religion a creature of the kingly power, and war an instrument of rapine, and not of justice; and we shall see that Samuel’s view of the matter was the true one, and in accordance with the proper vocation of a prophet. In the latter years of Solomon, when his government began to replace with the vices of an oriental despotism the virtues of a constitutional rule, the prophet Ahijah pointed out Jeroboam, the governor of the northern tribes, as the man whom the people might fitly rally round when the favourable opportunity occurred for throwing off a yoke which was becoming intolerable. And after Jeroboam had thus founded the separate kingdom of Israel his successors were more than once dispossessed by revolutions promoted by prophets. But experience showed that such habitual appeals to force—though in defence of law—did but increase the lawlessness of both kings and people; and, while the northern state was torn in pieces by the continuance of this policy of revolution, in the southern kingdom of Judah the reciprocal rights and duties of rulers and people became more defined and consolidated, and the necessity for violent revolutions became less, while the evils they would have inflicted on the nation became greater with its growing civilization, and the prophets, like the wiser political advisers in the more advanced times of other nations, kept themselves more strictly within the limits of the laws. Isaiah is unsparing in his denunciation of the vices, social or personal, of the king, the priests, the prophets, and the statesmen, as well as of the people; and he warns them that their guilt will bring upon them the punishment of foreign

conquest : but he does not, like the earlier prophets, take upon himself to disturb the existing order of the state by prompting or sanctioning revolutionary acts. And if we compare Isaiah's political counsels for patriotically resisting these very conquerors, whom he had yet declared to be God's scourge of the nation, with Jeremiah's advice to the Jews of his time, that they should submit quietly to the invader, we see another phase of the wisdom of the true prophet, who knows how to distinguish ends from means, and who can adapt new means to the ends when the old ones have failed to be applicable. For the patriotic spirit, which was still capable of being roused to worthy action in Isaiah's time, was sick unto death in that of Jeremiah ; and the question was no longer that of maintaining the grand old Hebrew polity against the Assyrian exterminators of law and order by universal despotism, but of protracting the miseries of political decay and extinction under the feeble tyranny of a Jehoiakim or Zedekiah and their nobles, when the harsh strong military rule of the Babylonian offered the only opportunity—and history has proved that it was an opportunity—for a national recovery even from that depth of wretchedness. Jeremiah has been condemned as unpatriotic, even as a traitor, for discouraging the resistance of the besieged city, while he shared its sufferings ; but he is fully justified by the results in the history of his own nation, and not less so by a comparison with the like results in the like circumstances of other nations, ancient and modern. It was of the essence of the prophet's calling that he should sacrifice the letter to the spirit, if need was ; and he did this, sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another : but if we look well, we may always see that he was never a mere denouncer and protester : the law was ever with him, as it has been with the wise political teacher of every nation, the counterpart of liberty, whether of speech or action ; and he knew that the counterpoise and reciprocal play of these two forces was constantly required for the well-being of the state, whatever means might be most fitting for that end. And thus, in that extremest case with which Jeremiah had to deal, when all faith in law and order had

died out of the hearts of the nation's own rulers, the prophet could teach the nation that it might still believe in the reality and vitality of these; but that for a season they must look for them from without, where then only could they be found.

But while the study of the writings and acts of the Hebrew prophets leads us to see that the analogy is real, and not fanciful, between these and the orators and political advisers of other nations, it shows us differences as well as resemblances. Demosthenes, and Cicero, and Burke, claim to speak in the cause of law and order, of justice and goodness; but the Hebrew prophet claims to speak in the name, and as the messenger, of the God of law and order, of justice and goodness. The Hebrew word which we translate *prophet*, in the original means a *speaker*, yet a speaker who has been instructed to speak by another, and that other, God. This is illustrated by Exodus iv. 16, 'And he shall be thy *spokesman* (נְבִיא, the word which is elsewhere rendered *prophet*) unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.' And again in Exodus vii. 1, 'I have made thee a God to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.' So Philo says that the prophet was 'one who spoke not his own words but those of another.' The verb, too, is always used in the passive voice, to imply the same idea.* And it must have been with this understanding of the name that the LXX. translated נְבִיא, by *προφήτης*: for the *προφήτης* of the Greeks was not the predictor, but the forth-speaker; he who spoke for a god and interpreted his will to man; though, while thus interpreting, he might be one to whom the future, no less than the past and present, were revealed:—

ὅς ἤδη τά τ' ἔοντα, τά τ' ἐσόμενα, πρό τ' ἔοντα.

Our Lord thus designates John the Baptist as a prophet, yea more than a prophet, because he was so especially a man sent from God, to declare the coming of his kingdom;

* Gesenius, *Lexicon*, words, נְבִיא and נָבִיא, under the former of which he points out the like usage of the Latin deponent verbs, *loqui*, *fari*, *vaticinari*, &c. See, too, Ewald, *Die Propheten*, I. 6, to the like effect.

so the Apostles and Evangelists use the term;* and so it has always been understood in modern times of most earnestness and zeal, such as our Reformation or Civil War, when men interpreted the Bible by experience gained in the council-chamber, the battle-field, or the prison, rather than by collation of commentaries. Thus Milton hopes, in his 'Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing,' that England is on the eve of becoming a nation of prophets; and Jeremy Taylor entitles his book on the like subject, a 'Discourse of the Liberty of Prophecy,' without a hint that he is using the word in any unusual sense.

In thus claiming to be, not only a teacher, but a teacher sent from God, the Hebrew prophet asserted for himself a position in harmony with that which he asserted for his nation also. The great men, and especially the great teachers, of any nation, pre-eminently exhibit the characteristics of their nation, while they carry them to an excellence and a height not attainable by inferior persons. Now we may say that the characteristic of the Hebrew nation, which distinguishes it from other nations, and marks the place which it holds in the history of the world, is its witness that the God who made heaven and earth is the moral and political Ruler of men and nations, and that men and nations stand in abiding personal relations with God, and God with them. If poetry and philosophy and political equality, if laws and constitutions and powers of self-government, be, in one sense, the birthright of all men, it is not the less true that these blessings were first acquired, matured, and reduced into possession for us, by the special agencies of the Greeks and the Roman. And if, as St. Paul told the Athenians and the Romans, the knowledge of God, and of the relations of God and man, was the birthright of all men, it is not less the fact (as St. Paul also points out), that this knowledge was made clear and coherent and vital in the hearts and lives of men, and matured and consolidated into an abiding inheritance for them, by the agency of the Hebrew nation. It is not

* Matt. iii. 1—12; xi. 9—14. Luke i. 17, 76, 77. Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 4; xiv. 6, &c.

without an effort of reflection, that we nineteenth century Englishmen realize the fact, that the belief in one living God, at once the Creator and the Moral Governor of the world, is not the natural belief of mankind. Yet the study of history not only shows us this, but also that though the early religion of the Greeks and of the Romans, and the successive efforts of the wisest and best among them, in developing and purifying that religion, might have been expected to lead to some such culmination in a true and pure faith, it was not so in fact. The piety of Homer and Æschylus and Socrates, of Numa and Scipio and Cicero, did not help the world to the attainment of a true faith, as well as to the attainment of true knowledge in art, in philosophy, and in civil government. But while the religion of the Greeks and the Romans decayed, and passed through superstition into scepticism and atheism, in spite of individual efforts to arrest the process, to the Hebrews it was given to advance, through national and personal struggles and sufferings, extending over many centuries, and even, at last, through national decay and death, to an ever higher and purer knowledge of God, and faith in God. We must look at the facts of the Hebrew history with a steady and prolonged investigation, to see, what we then do see, by how painful a process it was alone possible for men to learn that they are governed by one living and righteous God, at once their King and their Father and Friend. Then we see in that history, how erroneous, partial, and otherwise defective and unworthy beliefs were subjected to successive purifications and eliminations, as the Hebrew race passed through its course. The worship of idols, of many gods, even of the one God in places of supposed special sanctity, finally ends in the worship of God who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth; human,* and then animal sacrifices, are superseded by

* Though the history of Abraham had taught the Jews from the earliest times that God required men to sacrifice their own wills by obedience and faith, and not their children with actual knife, and wood, and fire; and though the law of Moses taught the same truth by directing the redemption and spiritual dedication of the firstborn of every human family, while the firstborn of all cattle was to be actually sacrificed; yet so deeply was the disposition to human sacrifice rooted in men's minds, that at the period of the nation's highest civilization we find Ahaz and Manasseh still sacrificing their

the sacrifices of a contrite or a thankful heart ; and the ritual of sacerdotal ceremonies gradually makes way for the liturgies, and readings and expositions of Scripture, through which the Synagogues passed into the assemblies of the Christian Church. Thus argues St. Paul (himself the last and, excepting his Divine Master, the greatest of the Hebrew prophets) when, in the Epistle to the Romans, he sets forth the calling and office of Israel, and shows how the mission was fulfilled, though from the days of Abraham to his own there had ever been a portion, and often the largest portion, of the nation so faithless and reprobate that he denies to them the name of Israel.

And while there was thus a continual progress making in the nation, in order to its arrival at these ends, and the future was a constant advance in excellence, and not merely in position, upon the past, the future was, in a very singular manner, a chief interest of the nation—that is, of the better and nobler part of the nation—and especially of its teachers. The Hebrew lived in the future, while he worked in the present and strengthened his energies for work and his future hopes by the traditions of the past. Grant as much or as little historical value to the narrative of Genesis and Exodus as the severest criticism may demand, or the temper of the critic dispose him to give, these narratives are still the mirror in which we see the lineaments of the Hebrew mind clearly shown to us. The Hebrew idea of creation is that of a cosmos of physical order and beauty, of which the inanimate and animate existences were evolved by the Creator according to the several laws which he had given to each ; yet all subordinated from the beginning to the descendants of the human pair who were to multiply till they had filled and subdued the earth, while they themselves were to live in personal relations with the Creator himself. And at every discovery of the fact that there are powers of evil arrayed to break down this order, and to resist man's attempts to enter into and possess his inheritance, there is

children to Moloch. They were every way bad kings ; but their depravity must have represented the depraved portion of the then existing nation, as much as its pious and virtuous portion was represented in Hezekiah and Isaiah.

a new promise for the future, a new assurance, not only that the victory shall be with the right, but that it shall be won by the aid of Jehovah present with his servants. The seed of the woman shall triumph over the seed of the serpent; the flood shall be followed by the rainbow; the descendants of the childless Abraham shall become a great nation in the land in which he is a wanderer; the Egyptian bondage shall be succeeded by the triumphs of the Red Sea, and the entrance to the Promised Land; and all by the same ever-present aid. What the Iliad and Odyssey were to the Greeks, what the traditions preserved to us by Livy were to the Romans, and what they are to us as the records of the original mind and character of these nations, such were, and are, the early books of the Old Testament to the Hebrews and to us. We see that the light in which the Hebrew read his history was the light of God's promises, fulfilled in the past, and confidently anticipated in the future; promises of the establishment, and maintenance, and endless evolution of the kingdom of Jehovah upon earth, with Jehovah present in his kingdom. Age after age these anticipations become more and more lofty, and more universal. As increasing civilization and civil progress extend the earthly horizon of the nation, so is their spiritual horizon extended by a new, and clearer, and fuller apprehension of what God's plans and promises are, and what his methods of carrying them into effect. It becomes continually clearer to the Hebrew mind, that not only the material, but also the human and spiritual, world has been constituted and is governed by the laws and counsels and actual superintendence of God, and that God employs men as his agents both for carrying on this government, and for revealing and explaining its character and methods. And the culmination and consummation of this national training were in the preparation of the nation to expect, and for the faithful of the nation to acknowledge and receive in due time, the actual coming of a Messiah, and thus realize the end which the writer to the Hebrews sets forth in the opening words of his Epistle:—‘God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the pro-

phets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by a Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds,' &c. Thus the nation became a nation of prophets, and its teachers prophets above all men, though bearing the common lineaments of all.*

But we shall best learn what the prophets were to the Jews, and what they are to us, by a methodical examination of what the greatest of them said and did, during a chief crisis of his country's history. The meaning and worth of institutions came to light in the collision of the Assyrian empire with the Hebrew commonwealth, as they did when Xerxes invaded Greece, or Napoleon overran Europe : and if we will take the Book of Isaiah, and follow its guidance, we may expect to see its facts—its representation of the Hebrew nation and their politics in the times of Tiglath Pileser, Sargon and Sennacherib,—in their own proper light. This, therefore, I propose to do.

As our familiarity with this Book of Isaiah increases, we find that the careful literary composition and elaborate finish of the single prophecies, noticeable as it is, is hardly more so than that with which these are again fused into larger, but not less organic members, and these again into one whole. And the most simple and probable explanation of this arrangement, if there be no insurmountable obstacle to its acceptance, is to attribute it to Isaiah himself. If it can be shown that this explanation, of the prophet's own arrangement of the book in its present form, is incompatible with the nature of its contents, we must give it up, and refer the compilation to such later date as the exigencies of the case require ; but we must not overlook that the latter is on the face of it the hypothetical and speculative, and the former the historical and positive criticism. For the arrangement of the book, with its general and particular titles and its historical notices, together with all that these assert (or imply) as to the authorship, have come down to us from time immemorial by the same means as the text itself, of which they must therefore be taken to be an integral and original part,

* For an exhaustive account of Hebrew Prophecy, see the Dean of Westminster's *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, xix. and xx., pp. 415—476.

until the contrary is proved ; and the one no less than the other must be protected by that canon of criticism, that no conjecture, however ingenious, must disturb the integrity of the text, however obscure, until the actual reading has been shown to be hopelessly corrupt. We cannot altogether dispense with supposition and conjecture as helps to the elucidation of such parts of this book as, by reason of their antiquity, must now remain without any more certain explanation ; nor need we doubt that conjectural criticism often throws a real, though a flickering, light on objects which are but dimly discernible in the distance of ages, if only the torch be kindled by a mind thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the writer commented on, and held in steady, that is judicious, hands. The studious and meditative genius of the German eminently qualifies him for these speculative inquiries and explanations ; but while the Englishman avails himself of them, with the frank acknowledgment that he could never have originated them himself, he must not scruple to test and modify them by the practical common sense which is *his* birth-right, and which, if a more modest, is not a less useful gift than the other. To exhaust the evidence and the arguments on every side of a question is the German's proper calling ; and I believe that the help of the German commentators is indispensable to our thorough understanding of the Prophecies of Isaiah : yet that they will be most serviceable to him who can best check speculation with not literal but matter-of-fact criticism ; who can abstain from doubting historical facts because contemporary records relate them in ways not easy of verbal reconciliation, or in phrases not the most obvious or likely if tried by the standard of his own mind ; and who is content to account for all such minor difficulties and discrepancies in the same way as he must the like ones which he finds in the books of his own day, and which the still living authors cannot, or do not, explain. Commentators often darken the text with the mists of their own undue speculativeness ; and by returning to a more practical method of investigation, by studying the book as it is, and not as ingenious theorists say it must have been,

we shall often secure a firm pathway through difficulties that conjecture has hopelessly perplexed.

The arrangement of the Book of Isaiah's Prophecies, as it has come down to us, is mainly chronological, yet sometimes with reference to the subjects rather than to the dates of the several pieces which form it. A like method is observable in St. Matthew's Gospel, in which the miracles, parables, and discourses are collected into groups without strict regard to the order of time; the Pentateuch, the Book of Psalms, and the Bible itself as a whole, are examples of the like composite arrangement, and we have a modern instance of the kind, with an exposition of its importance, in Mr. Wordsworth's avowedly deliberate arrangement of his poems into a whole.

The particular arguments will be found in their several places; the general conclusion I deduce from them is, that chapter vi. is the account of Isaiah's consecration to the prophetic office, and its date the earliest in the book; that the three preceding discourses (chapters i., ii.—iv., v.) are placed first, in order to set forth the state of the nation at the time Isaiah began to prophesy, and the consequent fitness of the severe terms of the commission given him; and that the rest of the book preserves the chronological order, with possibly such modifications as might serve to bring together similar prophecies, such as the series of 'burdens' on the neighbouring nations; and probably also in certain cases (chapters vii.—xii., xvii. xviii., xxviii.—xxxv., xl.—lxvi.) with some revision and fusion of discourses originally distinct, so that they are now successive paragraphs in a continuous writing. The supposed insurmountable obstacles to the acceptance of the conclusion that the book owes its present form to Isaiah's own hand, are the account of the 'Sign' of the shadow going back on the dial, and the doubt—which, indeed, the most eminent German critics say is not a doubt, but a final decision in the negative,—whether certain portions of the book were written by Isaiah at all. These will be best considered as they occur: I will here only notice, in connection with the latter question, the fallacy contained in an argument sometimes employed as to the arrangement

of the book, and which supposes it to be a collection like those which are popularly called the 'Psalms of David,' and the 'Proverbs of Solomon,' though it is admitted that only a portion of each can be ascribed to its nominal author. The fallacy lies in assuming that there is no difference between a real title, and a popular name, of a book. In the Hebrew the respective titles are, 'Isaiah,' 'Psalms,' 'Proverbs,' with no names attached to the two last; and both of these contain special titles expressly attributing various portions to other authors, while the whole book of Isaiah is almost as expressly attributed to him. And if we find indications that the whole, looked at as a whole, is more like the growth of an individual mind than a collection of writings of men who lived in times far apart from each other; if we can, as we proceed, trace the manner and method in which the prophet's views opened out, as he came in contact with, and sought for the deepest springs of, the circumstances and events of his own times; then the proportion and relation of particular parts to each other and to the whole will become an important element of the question, and those of which the genuineness is disputed will be seen in a light, and with advantages, not available to us if we merely analyze each separately. The fact of such a vital coherence and interdependence will, I believe, become more and more apparent as we go on; we shall find a harmony resulting not from mere mechanical compilation, but from the presence of a one informing and enlivening spirit, and our reason no less than our religious feeling will resist the dismemberment of any part of the organized whole. And if so, we shall (as can hardly be too often repeated) escape from the negative and the hypothetical to the positive and the historical.

For the negative easily passes into the hypothetical criticism. The commentators who are too little sensitive to the weight of evidence in favour of the facts we have, are ingenious in making out historical dates and details of what they say *must* have been the events of Isaiah's time, and alluded to by him in his prophecies. Such criticism is valuable in as far as it is a real induction; and an un hoped for, and interesting, verification of it has of late

years presented itself in the Cuneiform Inscriptions, which are already found to mention several facts which the Hebrew historians had passed in silence, but which are precisely those which the student of the prophets knew to be wanted, and which he had to assume in any attempt to form a distinct picture of the times. But the limit of real induction is soon reached; and the commentator who expatiates beyond it becomes unable to distinguish between facts and fancy. Each sees the error in his neighbour; but we shall perhaps best guard against it in ourselves if we consider that we possess no such power of discovering more than a mere outline of the facts on which any such book, even written by a still living author, is founded: no two men, even though fellow-countrymen and contemporaries, look at the same facts in exactly the same light, nor does either draw exactly the same inferences as the other would; and especially is this the case in writings in which the imagination of the poet or orator has a large part, because it is one of the prerogatives of the imagination not to be tied down to literal facts, but to modify, while it employs, these instruments of illustrating universal ideas or laws. It might have seemed the easiest thing possible to supply the facts assumed in most of Wordsworth's poems, by a simple enough use of the 'higher criticism;' but the actual statement of those facts in his *Memoirs* shows that they were quite different from what any criticism could have suspected.* We must admit of the Hebrew, what Niebuhr asserts of the Greek and Latin, literature,—that though we may be able to see that *some* facts were present to the writer's mind, it is often no more

* He presents, as though he had himself witnessed, various occurrences related to him by his sister; he also says of the *Evening Walk*,—'The plan of it has not been confined to a particular walk, or an individual place; a proof (of which I was unconscious at the time) of my unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance. The country is idealised rather than described in any one of its local aspects.'—*Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 68. Southey supplies us with another illustration:—'In one point I thought him (Sir George Beaumont) too much of an artist; none of his pictures represented the scene from which he took them; he took the features, and disposed them in the way which pleased him best You shall see a little piece of his which perfectly illustrates this. The subject is this very house, and scarcely any one object in the picture resembles the reality. His wish was to give the character, the spirit of the scene.'—*Life and Correspondence*, vol. vi. p. 216.

possible to re-piece them into an historical statement than it is to restore the statues or columns to which we know must have once belonged those marble fragments which we see everywhere built into the walls in modern Rome. We must be content with him to define the true interpretation of an ancient book as 'an expression of its meaning as it was understood, if not by its contemporaries, yet by those who lived shortly after, when the passing allusions of the moment were lost.'* Nor is it merely lapse of time which prevents our now recovering all the detail of the facts present to the eyes or mind of Isaiah, or of the other prophets. Jeremiah's statement (chap. xxxvi. 2, 4), that in the fourth year of Jehoiakim he wrote in a book all the words that he had spoken during a period of about twenty years: the fact that the short book of Micah is a summary of his discourses delivered during three reigns, as we learn from its title: the existence of like titles and inscriptions throughout the Prophetical Books: the explanatory narratives in some of them, and the manner in which these are introduced: the exact rhythmical structure, and elaborate finish of the composition, both of thoughts and language: all show that the writings of the prophets, as we now have them, are not verbal reports of their discourses set down before, or at the moment of, delivery, but careful literary compositions, in which these national preachers, at their leisure, and with the deliberate judgment and ability which the books themselves exhibit, put on record what was of permanent interest to their countrymen, and to all coming ages and peoples. And in doing this they would certainly (like men in the same circumstances now) obliterate, or suffer to become indistinct, references to events which were of absorbing interest at the moment of speaking, but which had given place to others at the time of writing, perhaps many years afterwards, though the eternal and universal truths which those particular events had best illustrated then, continued as important, and as worthy of proclamation as ever.† Nor need we lament

* *Letter to a Student of Philology*, translated in the *Educational Magazine* for January, 1840, and since then in his *Life and Letters*.

† See Ewald, *Die Propheten*, i. 42: or my translation of the first two

that we cannot restore these marks which the prophets have not themselves thought it necessary to retain. They are not only not necessary for a right understanding of our authors, but would have been a real hindrance : for they would have overlaid those universal truths, those enunciations of the laws of God's government of the world, which they teach us to see in all history, and not only in their own, and in which the highest interest of the Hebrew prophets for us consists. But if some commentators are thus mistaken in their anxiety to invent what they cannot find, others go into the other extreme of indifference to those links between the prophet and his own times which do actually remain, and are so important in enabling us to feel that he was a real flesh and blood man : the middle, matter-of-fact course of taking just what we really have given us, is the best, alike for historical and for philosophical and theological purposes.

sections of the Introduction (to which I thus refer) of this work of Ewald, in *Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature*, for January, 1853, p. 47.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.—ITS TITLE.—DATE OF CHAPTER I.—PROPHETIC IMAGINATION.—HEBREW ORATORY RHYTHMICAL.—PARALLELS IN OTHER NATIONS.—CONTENTS OF CHAPTER I.—TIMES OF UZZIAH AND JOTHAM.—FORMS AND SPIRIT.—NATIONAL BROTHERHOOD.—POLITICAL IDEALS.

THE book begins with its title :—‘The vision of Isaiah, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.’

This is at once the title of the whole book, and the title of the chapter of which it forms the first verse ; so as to indicate that the chapter is an introduction to the book, and a summary of its contents. If we compare it with the similar titles to the books of Amos and Micah, we may see from that comparison that there is no need for the conjecture of Vitringa, adopted by so many of his successors, that it, at first, ended with the word ‘Jerusalem,’ and belonged only to the single prophecy contained in the first chapter, and that some compiler of the book added the rest of the sentence to make a title for the whole. That the expression, ‘concerning Judah and Jerusalem,’ should be thus prefixed to prophecies which relate to Ephraim, Egypt, Assyria, and other neighbouring nations, will not appear a difficulty (if it ever did so), when we bear in mind that the language of the Hebrew, and above all of the Hebrew prophet, regards the life and force rather than the formal accuracy of its expressions. The highest kind of accuracy indeed, that which distinguishes and asserts the real differences and relations of things, it has ; but it is careless of, or rather unacquainted with, that classical

precision of word and inference which all European discourse is more or less imbued with. For the destiny of all these nations did in truth 'concern' Judah and Jerusalem, and only for this reason became the object of Isaiah's consideration. 'Whatever he utters against the heathen nations, he says it all for the sake of Judah.' *

But while this first prophecy, or discourse, forms a suitable summary and introduction to the whole book, and its actual place is thus sufficiently accounted for, there seems no reason for doubting that it was delivered on some special occasion. Its date therefore comes in question, and this must be decided according as we take verses 7, 8, to describe the actual state of the country when the words were uttered, or as prophetic of what it would shortly become. If the latter, we could not hesitate to refer it to the earliest period of Isaiah's ministry—the reign of Jotham,—which every other part of the discourse suits perfectly. If the former, it must have been delivered in the reign of Ahaz, before he shut up the temple; or during the Assyrian invasion in the time of Hezekiah: and the earlier date would be preferable, as less opposed to the position in which we find the prophecy, though it is not, as some commentators suppose, fixed by the mention of idolatry in verses 29, 30, 31, for we see from chapters xxx. 22, xxxi. 7, that this still co-existed with the worship of Jehovah, in the reign of Hezekiah, as it had in those of his predecessors. The doubt cannot be decided by the mere grammatical construction of the sentence as it could be in English, since the Hebrew prophets habitually use the liberty which their language permits, or even requires, of speaking of future events in the perfect tense. Thus the description of the invading army in chap. v. 26, is in the perfect tense in the Hebrew. But the question is, whether, in this particular place, the expressions are those of the poet and prophet picturing the scene as it rises in vision before his imagination, or whether there be something so matter-of-fact in them that they must be taken to describe the horrors of actual invasion, visible at the very time to the bodily eyes of

* Kimchi in Gesenius.

Isaiah and his hearers. There are learned authorities on each side, and they have been marshalled in a special treatise by Caspari, who decides in favour of the earlier date. If I could perceive the supposed difference between this and the ordinary prophetic style, I should (unless that difference made it impossible) still be decided by the external fact—the actual position of the discourse—to adopt the same conclusion. But while I recognise the thoroughly life-like character of the picture, I am not sure that it is more life-like than many which no one denies Isaiah to have drawn in imagination; nor (if I must argue the *à priori* point too) that the imaginative creations of such a master of his art as Isaiah can be thus positively distinguished from statements of fact. We must be guided by the context, the usual style of the writer, and the history of the times. The student of Isaiah's works knows that he does (like the other prophets) constantly fuse the present and the future into one life-like picture in which it is not always possible to separate imagination (or vision, as the Hebrews called it) from fact. If, then, we conceive such a fusion in the present case, and understand that the inroads and devastations of foreign armies were beginning when Isaiah delivered this discourse, but that he heightened his description of what had already occurred with a picture of what was certainly to follow, we shall find no date more suitable for the discourse than that of the latter days of the reign of Jotham, when 'Jehovah began to send against Judah Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah.'* The prosperity of the last sixty years was still existing, though beginning to break up under blows of which the prophet saw from the first that there were to be thenceforth a long succession.

And, perhaps, the finished and elegant structure of this prophecy may be taken with some propriety as itself an indication of the early date of its composition. It is the attribute of youth, and especially of youthful genius, to embody its newly-budding thoughts and feelings in ideals of microcosmic beauty and completeness: but by-and-bye the growing and expanding mind finds these ideals of its

* 2 Kings, xv. 37.

own creation too narrow to express the whole truth of things, and abandons them for the larger, though severally less complete, forms which the various realities of the actual world supply, and then seeks to find in these a new and better ideal, large as the world itself;—an ideal which is revealed to, rather than created by, the human mind; and the source of which, if we will go so far back, we must look for in that which the Athenian philosophers called the eternal truth and beauty of the divine mind, and Hebrew sages the things of the kingdom of God. That the marks of such a first youthful ideal are here conclusively present I do not venture to assert positively, but rather leave the point to the feeling and judgment of the reader; but certainly this short chapter may be taken as a very complete summary and specimen of the chief characteristics—moral, political, religious, poetical—of the whole book; and we may find in it the germs of almost all the great principles which Isaiah announced and applied to practice during the whole period that he exercised the prophetic office.

To Bishop Lowth we owe the first complete and conclusive analysis and explanation of the structure of Hebrew poetry, and the proof that the prophets wrote in the same measure or rhythm as the poets properly so called; and we could hardly have a better illustration of the latter fact than in the chapter before us. The rhythm of thoughts and images which in Hebrew poetry* takes the place of the rhythm of syllables and sounds, and enables it to be adequately translated into other languages, may here be studied in its several forms:—line answering to line, and word to word; each bringing out the depth and force of the other, sometimes by variation, sometimes by opposition, sometimes by accumulation, of the corresponding or contrasted thoughts; no thought so like the other as to occasion sameness, nor so unlike as to make a discord; no formal adherence to any one rule of parallelism, but a free movement in which the poet's inward sense of beauty and

* The primitive poetry of Transylvania and of some other nations is said to be characterized by a rhythm of thoughts instead of sounds; but the Hebrew alone has carried this rhythm into the period of mature civilization and literary culture.

order supersedes all formal rules ; and a blending and fusing of the several parts into a harmony which, with its variety in unity, produces a fulness not attainable in any other way. Let us take the first paragraph :—

Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth ;
 For Jehovah hath spoken.
 I have nourished and brought up children,
 And they have rebelled against me.
 The ox knoweth his owner,
 And the ass his master's crib :
 But Israel doth not know,
 My people doth not consider.

Here, in the first line, 'heavens' is set against 'earth,' and both united in rhythmical opposition to 'Jehovah,' the inanimate creation to the living God ; while 'hear' and 'give ear' in like manner correspond with each other and with 'spoken.' Then the next six lines have a double correspondence and double contrast of the four last lines among themselves, while the two preceding ones (which also balance each other) indirectly involve and anticipate the images of the four that follow :—'I' and 'me' corresponding and contrasting with 'owner' and 'master,' 'nourished' with 'crib,' and 'brought up' again with 'owner,' and 'children' with 'ox' and 'ass ;' and the rebellion of the former with the obedience of the latter : and the thoughts are again repeated with a variation and summed up in the two last lines. And, finally, those two lines, with that taste and judgment with which every true poet (and none more than Isaiah) keeps down his imagination, and subordinates the parts of his diction to the whole, turn back the mind from images to realities, bringing before it the very people of Israel and their sin.

Verses 18, 19, 20, supply us with another instance of very beautiful rhythmical construction :—

Come, now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah :
 Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow ;
 Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.
 If ye be willing and obedient :
 Ye shall feed on the good of the land.
 But if ye refuse and rebel :
 The sword shall feed on you,
 For the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

First the single introductory line ; then two, corresponding

as to the lines (yet with the artistic variation in the relative positions of 'white' and the answering 'red'), but with the parts of each line contrasting between themselves; then four lines, in which the balance is between the alternate lines, with a contrast of word for word in the first and third, and a play and contrast of words and images (which call up, as in a back ground, the whole picture both of rural plenty and foreign invasion) in the second and fourth lines; and then the single line brings the period to a full close, while it answers to its first line. These lines must have been elaborately constructed; and they evince a delicately cultivated and refined sense of beauty in the least as well as the greatest matters of the poet's art. And in this, as in every part of the rhythmic art displayed by Isaiah, there is a soul of poetry inhabiting and expressing itself through this beautiful form.

Yet we must repeat, that the prophet—that Isaiah—is not a poet, but a preacher or orator; his aim is not to delight, but to teach and persuade men: he is not content that his hearers should unconsciously receive into their hearts the seeds of truth and goodness in the form of beauty, there to take root and grow up, night and day, one knows not how: but he labours to impart these by direct indoctrination in all its moral methods of reproof, warning, consolation, and instruction. There may be no exaggeration in the assertion that Isaiah possessed poetic genius of the highest order, and had cultivated it with the utmost care; but it is his servant not his master, and he, the patriot and the man of God, habitually employs it for the purposes of his own proper vocation. The elaborate Masoretic punctuation, which has undertaken to mark the tone not only of words but of propositions, and so to preserve the sense of the thought, the internal life of the sentence,* in a dead language, recognises this distinction between the properly poetical books—Job, Psalms, and Proverbs—and those of the prophets. And while there are traces in the Hebrew text of the former, there are none in that of the latter, that they were once written verse-wise. On ground of form, then, no less than of substance,

* Ewald's *Hebrew Grammar*, translated by Dr. Nicholson, § 180.

I have thought it more correct—in the Version which the reader will find at the end of the volume—to represent the original by a translation printed as prose. At the same time I have—with a few exceptions, more or less required by the sense—marked the principal Masoretic pauses by the colon, full stop, and paragraph, much as is done in the Authorized Version.* And if we consider that the Hebrew language retained to the last its primitive simplicity of construction, and never acquired those complex developments of grammar which have fitted the classical and modern tongues for elaborate prose composition; and that for this reason, as well as because Hebrew verse was a rhythm of sense rather than of sound, the main distinction between it and prose must always have been in the tone of thought;—we shall find an important illustration in the rhythmical oratory of the Greeks at a period when their political culture, indeed, was at a much less advanced stage than that of the Jews in the time of Isaiah, but that of the two languages, as instruments of thought, apparently not so unequal. ‘We must recollect,’ says Mr. Grote, of this early rhythmical discourse, ‘that this was not only the whole poetry, but the whole literature of the age: . . . and writing, if beginning to be employed as an aid to a few superior men, was at any rate generally unused, and found no reading public. The voice was the only communicant, and the ear the only recipient, of all those ideas and feelings which productive minds in the community found themselves impelled to pour out; both voice and ear being accustomed to a musical recitation or chant, apparently something between song and speech, with simple rhythm, and a still simpler occasional accompaniment from the primitive four-stringed harp.’ And again,—‘Kallinus . . . employed the elegiac metre for exhortations of war-like patriotism; and the more ample remains which we possess of Tyrtaeus are sermons in the same strain, preaching to the Spartans bravery against the foe, and unanimity

* The Koran, and other rhythmical but not metrical books of the Arabs are always written as prose. The reader will find an interesting account of this prose, and of the resemblances and differences between it and the corresponding Hebrew literature, in Mr. Chennery’s translation of the *Assemblies of Hariri*, vol. i. pp. 41 ff.

as well as obedience to the law at home. They are patriotic effusions, called forth by the circumstances of the time, and sung by single voice, with accompaniment of the flute, to those in whose bosoms the flame of courage was to be kindled. For though what we peruse is verse, we are still in the tide of real and present life, and we must suppose ourselves rather listening to an orator addressing the citizens, when danger or dissension is actually impending.* The modern Italian improvisatore, too, can utter verse extempore; and such was the rhythm of Grattan's first speech in the English House of Commons, that we are told (in Lord Holland's Memoirs) that 'Mr. Pitt beat time to the artificial but harmonious cadence of his periods.' And Mr. Lecky says of Shiel's speeches that 'they seem exactly to fulfil Burke's description of perfect oratory, half poetry and half prose.† Even in the actual utterance of their discourses the Hebrew prophets must have come very near the rhythmical form of their written works: and with whatever mixture of simple or even rude prose we suppose them to have spoken, we see that they afterwards recorded the substance of their discourses in literary compositions, which for their careful editing may be better compared with Burke's pamphlets than with his merely reported speeches; while their eminently poetical thoughts and imagery, as well as diction, may remind us of the free blank verse in which Shakspeare idealises spoken discourse, as contrasted with the more restricted movement of Milton or Spenser. The following passage, too, may throw some light on the subject. 'My pamphlet . . . was composed as for an oration before an assembly, and flowed straight from my heart, and hence it must be read like a speech. Any one who should read it to himself, or aloud, without modulating his voice, in a uniform tone, like a treatise that is merely concerned with ideas, would probably be as much puzzled with it as the ordinary reader is with Greek orations . . . particularly those in Thucydides, before he has learnt to read with the ear . . . Most of our authors do not in the least know and consider, that the old prose

* *History of Greece*, vol. iv. pp. 100, 110.

† *The Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*, p. 257.

writers wrote as if they were speaking to an audience ; whilst among us, prose is invariably written for the eye alone, at least only for the ear in the case of an easy narrative. This is why my style is found so strange and unusual, and hence punctuation is so difficult to me, for I ought to have many more signs in order to indicate my exact intentions. In fact, with all that the writer composes as if he were speaking, the character of the movement, and the time, ought to be marked, as in music, for the ordinary reader.* I suspect this is the key to the music of our English Bible and Prayer Book. It also illustrates the Masoretic accentuation, of which I have spoken above.

Let us turn to the matter of the prophecy.

The heavens and earth are constant to the constitution and laws imposed on them by their Creator, and to them does Jehovah appeal against a nation who have ceased to believe in any moral order or government of the world : † the dumbest animals show an attachment to their owner's person, and a recognition of his manner of caring for them, though he keeps them only for his own profit ; but this people disregard and set at nought their filial relation to Jehovah, though he has chosen them out from all mankind to be his own children, bestowed on them the peculiar care and love of a father, reared them to man's estate by making them a nation, and by a long education qualified them to understand as well as to enjoy the blessings of this adoption. They have made themselves like those beasts of burden, loading themselves with their

* Niebuhr's *Life and Letters*, vol. i.

† Lowth here quotes Psalm l. 3, 4, Micah vi. 1, 2, Deut. xxxii. 1, and Deut. xxx. 19 ; and Gesenius Virgil's

'Esto nunc Sol testis, et hæc mihi Terra vocanti,' &c.—*Æn.* xii. 176.

To which may be added the appeal of Prometheus,—

‘Ὁ δῖος αἰθήρ, καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαὶ,
ποταμῶν τε πηγαὶ, ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνέριθμον γέλασμα, παμμήτορ τε γῆ,
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλιον ἡλίου καλῶ.’

Æsch. Prom. Vinc. 88.

And Hamlet's—

‘O all ye host of heaven, O earth!’

All are founded on the same intuitive feeling of the mind, that the works and

iniquities; so degenerated are they from their true birth-right, that they seem to be evil in their very stock and breed, like the Canaanites and other accursed races; *—‘They have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are gone away backward.’

Therefore punishment is coming upon the sinful nation, and punishment severe and repeated enough to rouse it from its obstinate rebellion, till, while it is adding new acts of revolt and apostacy, there seems no place left on which to strike again; as it is become thoroughly diseased at heart, it shall suffer outwardly in proportion to its inward insensibility; as there is no soundness, and no desire for soundness within, so shall it sink under the repeated strokes of a foreign invasion which adds fresh wounds to sores already festering, while it longs in vain for a deliverer and a healer. The vision of that woe rises before the prophet’s eyes, and he sees all the national fruits of the long and vigorous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham swept away. Uzziah had effectually humbled that old and troublesome enemy of Judah, the Philistines, dismantling their fortified cities, and establishing his own garrisons in their territory: on the opposite side he had reduced the Ammonites to their proper condition of tributaries, from which they had never lost any opportunity of revolting since David conquered them: he had recovered the port of Elath on the Red Sea, rebuilt it, and thus, after an interval of about eighty years, restored to Judah an important share in the commerce of the world: and he had strongly fortified Jerusalem, and organised a well-armed and disciplined militia, ‘that went out to war by bands,’ that so the people might not be taken from the cultivation of the land and other peaceful occupations

powers of outward nature are an abiding witness for a settled constitution and order in the universe, however overlooked or defied. So Wordsworth in his *Ode to Duty*,—

‘Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong.’

Nor should we overlook the contrast of the pantheistic language of the classical parallels, with the distinction between the world and its Maker which is so clear to the Jew that he does not so much assert as assume it as an axiom impossible to doubt.

* See below, on chapter xiv. 28.

except in regular turns. And while by these means 'his name spread abroad, even to the entering in of Egypt, for he strengthened himself exceedingly,' he was no less active in availing himself of the peace he had secured abroad to encourage commerce and agriculture at home, he himself setting an example in the latter which his nobles were not slow to follow: 'he built towers' for the protection of his flocks 'in the desert' or commons where they pastured, 'and digged many wells, for he had much cattle both in the low country and in the plains, husbandmen also and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved husbandry:' the re-opening of the port of Elath would not merely have enabled his merchant-ships to supply Judah and Jerusalem with the luxuries of Africa and India, but would have made Judæa the direct natural highway of much of the traffic between those countries and Europe which the Phœnicians carried on by help of trade-caravans, and which would previously have taken a different route; and while trade and agriculture thus filled the land with wealth, Egypt supplied them with horses and chariots: and what the reign of Uzziah had begun, that of Jotham, at the end of half a century, was still carrying on.* And now the prophet beholds all overthrown, the cities burned, the cultivated fields and the pastures laid waste, and the whole land devoured, plundered, and devastated, as is the way when foreign and barbarian enemies invade a country,† while the inhabitants look on, unable to resist, and Jerusalem itself, the

* 2 Chron. xxvi., xxvii.

† "England is become the residence of foreigners and the property of strangers; at the present time there is no Englishman, either earl, bishop, or abbot: strangers all, they prey upon the riches and vitals of England; nor is there any hope of a termination of this misery."—*William of Malmesbury*, ii. 13.

'Look on thy country, look on fertile France,
And see the cities and the towns defaced
By wasting ruin of the cruel foe.
See, see, the pining malady of France,
Behold the wounds, the most unnatural wounds,
Which thou thyself hast given her woeful heart.'

First Part of King Henry VI. iii. 3.

Grotius quotes—

'Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit?
Barbarus has segetes?'—*Virg. Ec.* i. 71, 72.

only remaining hope, is threatened with siege. Then, by one of those transitions and combinations with which the imagination can throw a gleam of light and beauty over the darkest and most terrific picture, and yet at the same time even heighten its truth and force, the wasted fields seem to the prophet like the vineyards and cucumber gardens at the end of the fruit season, when they are indeed stripped and trampled, and desolate-looking, yet only because the crops have been gathered in for the benefit of the husbandman: and the sole surviving capital stands there apparently abandoned by its divine watcher and keeper, like the cottage or lodge—sometimes a temporary booth of branches, or a hammock, but sometimes, no doubt, a stone cottage, such as we see in the like vineyards and gardens in Provence—which sheltered the keeper of the vineyard or garden as long as its fruits could tempt the jackal and the fox, and was then shut up for the season, or left as useless: yet, inasmuch as it is ‘like a besieged city,’ it is garrisoned as well as beleaguered, and hope remains within, though desolation is without.* And then the thoughts and images of selfish prosperity and general calamity, of national sins and divine judgments, but of a small remnant saved through and out of all, assume another form, and recall the ancient fate of those cities which were destroyed because Jehovah could not find ten righteous men therein:—‘Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah.’

Jehovah of hosts, or of armies, is a favourite expression of the Hebrew writers, and especially of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Malachi, by which they recognize him as the universal governor of heaven and earth, ‘who has ordained and constituted the services of men and angels in a wonderful order:’—

‘His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed

* Knobel would translate ‘like a watch tower,’ understanding either a military post or a tower like those which Uzziah built in ‘the wilderness,’ and which at once protected and sheltered the flocks which pastured in the open plains round it.

And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait:—

and who employs his kingly and almighty power to rule the nations in righteousness, and, as now, both to punish and to save his chosen people. Nor need we be deterred by grammarians from discovering a like depth and beauty of meaning in the phrase just before—‘the daughter of Zion,’ or doubt that to the mind of the prophet and his thoughtful hearers it called up the idea of the nation having been brought up by, set apart for, and by formal covenant united to, Jehovah; called his bride; and appointed to show forth, in the constitution, and order, and duties, of national society and political life, a new and wider manifestation of those laws of God’s relation with, and government of, man, of which marriage was the first type: while the name of Zion would remind them of a city founded upon a rock, and that could not be moved—set upon a hill, and that could not be hid.

The sin of Sodom is said (Ezekiel xvi. 49) to have been pride, fulness of bread, abundance of idleness, and contempt of the poor and needy; their land was one of peculiar fertility, and they had given themselves up to a mere life of nature, till they wallowed in all the worst sins that break out from such a life. National institutions are the proper means of preserving a people from, or raising them out of, naturalism; but the prophet protests that his countrymen were sunk in it, notwithstanding their national polity, and their strict maintenance of its forms. He seems to say that the blasted site of the cities of old was a perpetual witness to the Jews of God’s wrath against this sensualism—a witness abiding from generation to generation in the very midst of them—yet they were reckless of the warning: just as the Neapolitans seemed to Arnold to be when he was contemplating the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and drawing the like moral from it. This belief that there is a more than accidental relation between moral and physical evils, though apparently supported by many facts in the history of nations and individuals in all ages, is opposed by the

logical conclusions from wider and more exact observation, as it is by our Lord's declaration that the men on whom the tower of Siloam fell were not sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem. But such a belief was held by Isaiah and all the prophets as a part of their faith in God's moral government of the world ; nor can it be doubted that physical calamities have, in fact, in all ages exercised a moral influence on men's consciences, though the action may have been through the imagination and not through the reason.

The prophet kindling at the thought of his own comparison, and feeling how just a one it is, calls on those men—rulers and people—who, though professing to administer and obey the law of Jehovah, were in heart no better than the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, to hear what the law of Jehovah is in spirit and in truth. They still maintain all the external forms of religion according to the established ecclesiastical ritual, but no inward faith quickens them. This has ever been the great abuse of religious forms in all nations and times. Forms there must be ; they are a real, vital part of religion, as the body is a real part of the man : but when they lose their life they become as worthless and corrupt as a *dead* body. To preserve this life is the difficult task : it must be fed direct from heaven through a channel that can only be kept open as long, and as far, as man consents that his spirit should be raised above the routine of nature and the world. And this elevation is so irksome to our nature, it is so much pleasanter that morality and religion should go on, like digestion, by the unconscious working of a mechanical organization, that men are always yielding to the delusion that the thing can be accomplished,—from the African or the Buddhist, who multiplies his prayers by help of a rotary calabash or drum, to the Romish or Anglican priest, who 'makes God' with robings, and genuflexions, and unintelligible utterances, and the elevation of a wafer, or the Protestant divine with his 'Letter of Scripture,' and his Articles which are to fasten truth, like an idol, 'with nails so that it shall not be moved,' and to establish a 'doctrine and discipline from which he

will not endure any varying or departing in the least degree.' Therefore Isaiah protests in Jehovah's name that the Law is not in the forms but in the meaning of them : sacrifices of bullocks and goats are worthless if they are not the symbols of an actual though inward sacrifice of that fleshly will which is separating the worshipper from Jehovah's spiritual presence ; the multitudes who throng the courts of the temple, and think they are keeping the command to 'appear before Jehovah,' though their hearts are far away, are but treading that command under their feet (as the Hebrew word implies) : oblations which express no sincere thankfulness are vain : incense with which no prayer of the heart ascends is an abomination : new moons* and sabbaths do but mock God when they are kept by men who are grinding the faces of the poor with unremitted and unrewarded work : the great yearly assemblies are worse than idle types of national brotherhood in the midst of universal and habitual oppression and misery. And such a national worship and obedience to the law as this will obtain nothing from Jehovah in the day of calamity : men may lift up their hands in prayer, but in vain, while those hands have been so long and deeply stained with blood ; they must wash them thoroughly (still alluding to the ecclesiastical ritual), by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well ;† they must 'seek justice, restrain the oppressor, right the fatherless, maintain the widow's cause.' If they will so reform, and return to true obedience to their King and their God, he will himself wash them thoroughly from all their iniquity, though it be more deeply ingrained than the power of man can reach. The word translated *reason*, means also *plead* or *argue* in a court of justice, as it does in Job xxiii. 7, and Micah vi. 2. The context shows that both ideas must be included here ; for while the whole tone of this prophecy is

* The first of the month was kept by special public worship, when the trumpets were blown (Numbers xxiii. 11—15 ; x. 13 ; Psalm lxxxix. 3) ; by rest from trade (Amos viii. 5) ; by religious instruction (2 Kings iv. 23) ; and perhaps by feasting (1 Sam. xx. 9).

† The Masoretic punctuation here breaks through the parallelism, but perhaps rightly ; just as Shakespeare and Milton occasionally introduce rugged or halting lines to give freedom and vigour instead of a too monotonous regularity of rhythm.

judicial, arraigning the unjust and iniquitous rulers of the Jewish nation before the judgment-seat of their invisible King, the reformation, which is the end of judgment, is never lost sight of, the fatherly character of the Judge is always present, and he reasons with the culprit, and is willing to be reasoned with. He offers them the like justice and mercy which he calls on them to show to others. They are to come into court not merely to receive condemnation but to argue out their own cause, and to hear the reasons of their sentence, nay, to obtain its reversal if they will. For he remembers his covenant, and is not a God of mere power and wrath, nay, not even of mere unbending law, but a living Lord of righteousness and love, resolved indeed to maintain absolutely and without infringement his own holiness, and justice, and truth, yet desiring that the most disobedient should still depart from his sin, and return and live again under his holy constitution and government, and enjoy the blessings of so doing, loving God, and knowing that God loves him : therefore, in the midst of all these threatenings, God appeals to the people themselves whether he is not *reasonable* in his conduct towards them. Thus the word is at once expressive of the deepest truth and meaning, and in accordance with the actual practice of the Hebrew institutions, which preserved much of their patriarchal character, as those of all Eastern nations do to this day, even when most corrupt.

‘The faithful city is become a harlot’ :—Jerusalem, the daughter of Zion, the wife of the Holy One of Israel, has broken the bond of her covenant with him, has set at naught the divine constitution and order in which he originally placed, and has continued to sustain, her : and, as the outward consequence and sign of this spiritual defection, has actually fallen to the worship of other gods. Throughout this prophecy Isaiah dwells chiefly on the sins of the princes and rulers of the nation, and only incidentally on those of the people ; and accordingly, he now dilates on the characteristic vices of the former, which are the fruits of their national unfaithfulness. Social and

political morality have vanished along with religious faith ; thieves and murderers are found instead of virtuous citizens ;* the nobles and men in authority are the first to break the laws they should enforce ; the administration of justice is so corrupt that the judges take bribes, connive at the robbers whose booty they share, and permit the rich man to pervert the law for the oppression of the fatherless and the widow, who have no patrons to demand, and no money to buy, justice : and thus the aristocracy, setting aside all belief that they hold their wealth and power in trust from God for the benefit of the people under them, do but employ these as irresistible engines for breaking down all rights that can oppose them in their pursuit of luxury and vice. Therefore will the mighty LORD of the nation put forth his strength, and purge out these iniquities as the metal smelter separates the dross with alkali (the literal sense of 'purely'), destroying those who have defied and renounced him, and by means of this severe discipline restoring the nation to its former and true character of a people faithful to God, and dealing uprightly with each other. 'Zion shall be redeemed' through this execution of judgment, and her restored and reformed children shall dwell within her walls in righteousness. 'Converts' implies restoration alike from captivity and from moral bondage : it is a cognate word to that translated 'return' in chapter x. 21.

It may be asked, At what former period of Jewish history did the nation deserve that character for faith and righteousness which Isaiah ascribes to it 'at the beginning?' and at what subsequent time was it restored to the condition which he promises 'afterwards?' I must reply, —not by pointing back to the days of Moses or Samuel, or David, or Solomon, nor forward to those of Hezekiah, Josiah, or the Maccabees ; for it could be shown that the men who lived at each of those times were ready to cry out against their special corruption, but—by reference to that universal habit of men's minds to suppose a past and hope for a future, realization in actual life, of their ideals

* The word 'lodging' is suggested by the image of a populous city ; 'silver' by its wealth ; 'wine' by its luxury.

of human perfection. Few men, in any time or country, have that power of metaphysical abstraction which can enable them to contemplate ideals as such ; and even they, when they descend to practical life, and the practical instruction of the men around them, find it necessary to translate their ideas into the popular language. The oppressed Saxon prayed for the restoration, by his Norman tyrant, of the laws of Edward, though it would have been difficult for him to prove the personal merits of that king as a legislator or ruler ; the Long Parliament based all its demands on the ancient rights of the Commons ; the French and English Republicans of the last century referred to an original social contract ; and in our own day the Church of the first centuries and the chivalry of the middle ages, supply to considerable classes a local habitation and name for their ideals of life, though it would not be easily shown that there ever was an adequate historical realization of any one of them. We all feel indeed that there is a fact no less than a truth recognized in such language, both as to the past and the future. There is a continual progress in the world, and every step of it is gained by the triumph of some good over some evil, and consequently by some realization in fact of what, till it had so triumphed, could only assert itself in idea. Thus the new is always the restoration of the old, and the old the promise of the new, and the whole ideal of time is in light, though the particular moment as it passes is marked by shadow. It will become increasingly apparent as we go on, how important an element of the prophetic character and office this belief and promise of the realization of a perfect commonwealth was, and in what relation it stands to the search or longing for such a society by the philosophers and philanthropists of other nations and times.

But to return to the detail of the text before us. In the judgments and the restoration which the prophet foretells, he declares that the people shall learn the worthlessness of the idols which they have been worshipping under the oak trees, and in the sacred groves and gardens. The worship of the High Places, as I have shown above (page 5),

was partly a local worship of Jehovah, which only became irregular and blameable in later times; but there was also a widespread worship of Baal, Astarte, and Moloch, the old gods of the Canaanites and other nations, in sacred groves and gardens as well as on the hill-tops—a worship of impersonated and deified sensuality and cruelty—which sometimes even established itself within the precincts of the temple itself, and was still more readily blended with, or substituted for, the worship of Jehovah in the High Places. And this idolatrous worship was going on in Judæa during the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, at the same time with the temple services, as appears from 2 Kings xv. 3, 4, compared with 2 Chron. xxvii. 2.* In the day of judgment and restoration, says the prophet, these men who have been flourishing in their sin like their oaks, and living in pleasures like those of their well-watered gardens, shall find that the idols to which those oaks and gardens are dedicated, have no power to save them from a destruction which shall make them ‘as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water,’—images which will be the more forcible if we remember that in a southern climate, trees fade rather from excessive heat than from seasonable cold, and a garden without water is a mere desert of sand. Then shall the strong, the mighty, and the unjust ruler become tow, and his idols, the work of his hands, a spark; they shall both burn together, and no man shall quench them.

In verse 29, is an instance of what seemed to Lowth’s classical taste a corrupt reading:—‘*They* shall be ashamed of the oaks which *ye* have desired.’ But this variation of the persons of the verb is not unusual in Hebrew, and certainly no corruption. Indeed, if we look at Psalm xci., which is very artistically constructed, we shall see reason to think that what jars so harshly on a classically trained ear was a beauty to the Hebrew poets. I dwell the more upon these peculiarities of idiom and composition, because I believe that we cannot understand the meaning of Isaiah, any more than we can of Shakspeare, unless our minds are

* For allusions to the subject at other times, see Deut. xvi. 21, 1 Kings xvi. 23, 2 Kings xvi. 4, 2 Chron. xxviii 4, Ezekiel vi. 13.

emancipated from servile adherence to classical rules. Each language and literature has its own laws, and these are derived from and connected with a distinctive national mind, which expresses itself in its own way through the great writers of each nation : and thus language becomes a key to national character.

CHAPTER III.

ISAIAH II., III., IV.—HEBREW GENIUS IMAGINATIVE RATHER THAN LOGICAL.—
PERFECT AND IMPERFECT TENSES IN HEBREW.—THE LAST DAYS.—CONTRAST
OF THE IDEAL AND ACTUAL STATE OF THE NATION.—FOREIGN INFLUENCES.
—PRIVATE IDOLATRY.—POLITICAL MATERIALISM.—NATIONAL DECAY.—
LAWS OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.—GOOD AND EVIL OF COM-
MERCE.—HEBREW MATRONS. FEMALE LUXURY.—ITS PUNISHMENT.—THE
BRANCH OF JEHOVAH.—THE RESTORED THOUGH HUMBLER NATION.

THE next discourse, consisting of chapters ii., iii., iv., is entitled, 'The Word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.' The propriety of applying the phrase 'saw' to 'the Word' is apparent, if we refer ourselves to the mental process which takes place in meditating upon any important truth, especially while the vividness of the first discovery lasts; and still more is it obvious, as we read the discourse itself, and look at its various pictures of military power, maritime commerce, wealth, luxury, pride, selfishness, and irreligion; of political misgovernment, anarchy, and decay; and of ultimate reform and restoration.

No arguments need be added to prove that the prophecy depicts the state of society in the period between the latter end of the reign of Uzziah and the beginning of that of Ahaz, and that we may properly fix the date of its delivery within those limits, and when the prospects of the reign of Ahaz were coming into view. The initial 'And' here, as in chapters vi. 1; vii. 1; viii. 1; and elsewhere, may be among the indications that the book has been revised and edited by the author as a whole.

The opening paragraph—a passage of aphoristic completeness and beauty, and here serving as a text to the

subsequent discourse—is found also, with a few verbal alterations, in Isaiah's contemporary, Micah (chap. iv. 1—3). Conjecture has variously attributed it to each of these prophets, and to some older one, copied by both : the last is, perhaps, the more probable supposition, though the evidence is not sufficient for certainty.

This description of 'the Last Days'—which in the Hebrew begins, 'And it hath come to pass (הָיָה *perf.*) . . the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be (יִהְיֶה *imperf.* or *fut.*), established,' &c.—is an instance of the use which I have already referred to of the perfect tense to express the certain future. Its explanation, in as far as this is the place for considering it, seems to be that the structure of such a passage as that before us is imaginative, not logical—a picture, not a statement. The speaker completely projects himself into "the last days;" he *is* there, he finds them come; he looks about him to see what is actually going on, and sees that the mountain of Jehovah's house is about to be—still in process of being—established at the head of the mountains; he looks again, and the nations have already arrived at the place prepared for them, yet so freshly that they are still calling one another on; and as they come up they find that the King they seek is already there, and has effected some of his judgments and decisions before they arrive for their turn.

So thoroughly does this imaginativeness pervade the language not only of the prophets but of the historians, so habitually has the imaginative and not (as with us) the logical faculty dictated the laws of Hebrew grammar, that the form 'and it hath come to pass' in the first line, 'refers always to a future event;' while that of 'shall be' in the second, is usually equivalent to the *ἐγένετο* of historical narration.* And the subject is still more clearly explained in the general rule that in continued narrations of the past, only the first verb stands in the perfect tense, the others being in the imperfect or future; and on the contrary, in continued descriptions of the future, the first verb is in the future or imperfect, while the rest are in the perfect. Thus in Genesis i. 1 :—'In the beginning God

* Gesenius, *Lexicon*, word הָיָה.

created (*perf.*) the heavens and the earth : And God said (*imperf.* or *fut.*) Let there be light, and there was (*imperf.*) light : And God saw,' &c. And just the reverse in Isaiah vii. 17, ff. :—'Jehovah will bring (*fut.* or *imperf.*) upon thee and upon thy people, days such as have not come since' &c. 'And it hath (*perf.*) happened on that day . . . And they have (*perf.*) come.'* In both these examples the speaker evidently places himself in the midst of the events themselves, describing the past creation as it would have been seen by that eye that 'was there or ever the earth was, while as yet he had not made the land nor the fields,'† or picturing the future as Ahaz would realize it after it had become the past.

Nor is it only in the Hebrew language and its grammar, that this characteristic appears : it pervades the whole genius of the nation, the structure and growth of their laws and institutions, and the acts and habits of their legislators and statesmen, as well as the writings of their poets and historians : they are 'of imagination all compact ;' a very 'nation of prophets ;' the vision of a perfect, and therefore future still more than past or present, kingdom of Jehovah, is always before them, and to its realization as their goal, and their appointed rest, they press forward through the mere actual and present. It may be difficult for an Englishman, in our nineteenth century, to enter into this state and habit of mind, and so into that creative faculty or power of prophecy which we no longer possess in its ancient form. But it is a difficulty somewhat analogous to that which we find in realizing the state of mind which created languages and mythologies, and which in those ways also was so highly imaginative, that in the present stage of the human race, and the now predominating development of the reasoning faculties, we have no corresponding inward experience.‡ Yet the faculty of

* See the Grammars of Ewald and Gesenius on these tenses.

† Proverbs, viii. 22—30. The whole passage bears on this point in a noticeable manner.

‡ 'It may be observed as a general fact,' says Dr. Prichard, 'that Languages appear to have become more permanent as we come down towards later times. During the last ten or perhaps the last fifteen centuries, they have undergone few alterations except through the effect of conquest, or the intermixture of nations. The Bretons . . . are still easily intelligible to

imagination still exists in us ; and if we study its character and workings in our own minds, and in the writings of the poets of our own, and of other times ; if we meditate upon the distinctive features of the Hebrew mind, literature, language, and institutions, in their action and reaction upon each other, and as they correspond with, or differ from those of other nations ; if we consider that there is a growth (with its consequent losses as well as gains) of the human race, no less than of its several families and individual men ; if, lastly, we believe that these characteristics of the Hebrew mind were so heightened, adapted, and directed by the influence of political institutions, and local and historical circumstances, as that men chosen out

the natives of Wales. . . . The Scots who emigrated from the north of Ireland to Argyleshire can still converse with the natives of Ireland. Languages, by intermixture of nations, become disintegrated ; they lose part of their grammatical modifications. . . . In the mean time no new forms of human speech are produced : no new varieties of inflection expressive of the modification of ideas by changes in the endings or the initial syllables of words are ever attempted : particles and auxiliaries are inserted to supply the want of obsolete inflections. Formations of language and the development of grammatical systems have long ceased. As in geology, we now only witness the disintegration of what the first ages produced. How different was the habit of the human mind with regard to language in the age when the Sanskrit, the Greek, the Latin, and the Mæso-Gothic, idioms were developed from one common original!—*Researches into the Physical Hist. of Mankind*, ii. 221, 222. The whole paragraph is most interesting, as showing man's original powers of language-making, and their gradual cessation.

And K. O. Müller thus speaks of Mythology :—‘ But how can we arrive at an idea of its (the Mythus) real nature and import ? Such an idea cannot be attained *à priori*, as we have it only from experience ; neither is it immediately, and of itself, intelligible, being utterly unknown as a product of our times. It is a purely historical idea ; an idea, moreover, by which a creation of very remote times is to be conceived. It cannot possibly be arrived at otherwise than historically. But how is its historical perception possible, the mythus itself being the only source of the idea of the mythus, and appearing, too, in a form different from its contents ? In the statement of an historical fact the form and the contents correspond ; an acquaintance with the language forms the bridge which leads from one to the other. But *here* they lie further apart, and the path must first be sought, is itself a problem. In other words, mythi must be interpreted, must be explained, ere we can attain a knowledge of their contents. This must be done in a thousand individual instances ere we shall be able to seize the essence of the mythus as a general idea. And then the question still remains, whether we can express the knowledge thus attained by an idea such as passes current amongst us, or by a simple combination of such ideas ; whether we do not find something compounded, according to our notions, of multifarious, widely separated, and heterogeneous materials, the union of which is based on a mode of thinking entirely different from ours.’—*Scientific Mythology*, translated by Leitch, p. 6.

The practice of sacrifice by all the nations of antiquity, with its abandonment by those of Christendom, as also by the Mahometans, is another of the changes in kind, and not merely in degree, of the mental habits of a large part of the human race.

of this nation might, without any violent, arbitrary, or in any way monstrous, subversion of their human nature and faculties, be made the fit instruments of God's revelation of himself to men :—then we shall perhaps find that there is a rational and intelligible idea of prophecy attainable by us ; and that in proportion as we realize it, it will make clear the dark and difficult places in the writings of the prophets, and deliver us from the fear of having to choose between interpretations fairly obnoxious to the charge of introducing the doctrines of superstition, and even magic, into religion, and those of a sceptical criticism which is often as regardless of historical and literal fact as of true philosophy and Christian faith. Historical criticism, like comparative physiology, obtains its results by ascertaining the resemblances and the differences of very various forms of life under various conditions of time and place. And it is by this method that we must seek the key to many difficulties in Jewish, as well as other ancient history, which the destructive critic gets rid of by a mere reference to the standard of his own age and country.

Isaiah then, 'rapt into future times,' sees the throne of the LORD of Israel established in sovereignty over all the nations of the earth, and they becoming willing subjects to him, and friendly fellow citizens to each other. The nations attain to true liberty, for they come to submit themselves to the righteous laws and institutions, and to the wise and gracious word and direction, of that King whose service is perfect freedom ; and to true brotherhood, for they leave their old enmities and conflicts, and make the same LORD their judge, and umpire, and reconciler. And all this, not by some newly invented device of the nations, some new result of their own civilization, but by the carrying out of the old original purpose and plan of God, that his chosen people of the Jews should be the ministers of these good things, and that in them should all nations of the earth be blessed,—that 'out of Zion should go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.' This is the vocation of the Hebrew people. This, says the prophet, is the key to all our duties as a nation, this is the master-light to guide us to right action.

Then, in words which are half-appeal, half-declaration that the appeal is in vain, he exclaims :—‘ O house of Israel, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah.’ The house of Israel is, indeed, willing enough for, and is already practising, a universal brotherhood of nations, but quite of another fashion from this. They have filled themselves to repletion with the idolatries and divinations of the Syrians, Chaldæans, and Philistines; and on every side have joined themselves to the heathens by marriages, political alliances, commercial intercourse, and adoption of religious rites. *Juventutem studiis externis degenerare*, was the complaint of the Romans who were still faithful to the ancient discipline, in the time of Nero*; and even in our own Christian times, and among Christian nations, these are great causes of national deterioration; and Moses† and the prophets are proved by the result to have judged rightly, for their own times, that nothing but the strict exclusion of such foreign influences could preserve the moral, political, and religious nationality of their country. I would urge the thoughtful consideration of these verses (2—9) on any one who is perplexed by the confident assertion of writers who prefer vague declamation to close investigation and reasoning, that the Hebrew prophets were actuated by a bitter hatred of foreigners. He will, I think, discover (from this and such like study) that they were possessed by views and hopes of a philanthropy which even our own times have not been able to extend: they longed for fellowship with all men, under the only conditions in which fellowship is possible; they desired an universal communion of virtue, humanity, and goodness, and could not be content to have a general licence of vice, brutality, and wickedness instead; and they advocated what they saw, and what all history has proved, to be the only way of avoiding the one and securing the other.

For the like reasons Moses had forbidden, and Isaiah

* *Tacit. Ann.* xiv. 20. quoted by Vitrिंगa.

† I do not mean to pronounce on the date or authorship of the Pentateuch in its present form, though I have no doubt of the antiquity of its substance: but in any case Moses is as truly the representative of Hebrew, as Lycurgus is of Spartan, legislation.

here proceeds (no doubt with a reference to the law of Moses) to censure, the accumulation of wealth, and the multiplying horses and chariots. The nation had come to the state from which Moses would have kept it back if possible : it was rich, luxurious, and put its trust in the physical force of its standing army, and meanwhile had forgotten its divine King, and the covenant between them. And therefore the land had become 'full of idols.' It has been noticed that these were doubtless worshipped in many groves and high places during the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, though these kings formally upheld the national worship of the true God ; but we may (with Vitranga) especially refer this passage to the Teraphim, the Penates or Lares 'which they made each one for himself to worship,' and to divine with, in their own house ;—a species of idolatry which from the earliest times is found among those who yet professed the worship of Jehovah. The whole ecclesiastical scheme of the Hebrew polity tended to elevate the members of the nation out of a selfish state, and bring them to a consciousness of the dignity and virtue of being 'members one of another ;' while the effect of this private superstition, which had filled the land with idols, must have been the exact contrary. So many gods, so many centres of social attraction and repulsion. A state of things in which every man has his own god in his own house, is mere naturalism, Shammanism, or Fetish-worship, and cannot rise above the horde-life, into which family or patriarchal life sinks, if not comprehended in and upheld by national institutions, and especially a national worship. The bond of political society in Greece, or in Rome, was the national recognition of Apollo or Pallas, Jupiter or Mars. And if faith was thus potent as long as it remained sincere, though its objects were imaginary, not less was it necessary to the people whose God was Jehovah. But since they have forsaken him, in the office to which he had appointed them among the nations, the prophet declares that Jehovah too hath forsaken them, and will not forgive them.

Jehovah hath forsaken them as their father and friend,

but he comes to call them to account as their judge. Men of every rank, high and low, have been humbling themselves everywhere before their idols ; they shall now be compelled to bow down before Jehovah, for all their haughtiness. The day of the LORD of Hosts is at hand ;—that crisis or ‘day of judgment,’ in which he who upholds and directs the universe and its inhabitants by righteous laws and administration executes on the impenitent breakers of those laws the sentence which he has pronounced against them. The Flood, the destruction of Sodom, the invasion of Judæa in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar or by Titus, were held by the Jewish prophets and preachers—as the like national crises in ancient and in modern history have ever been held by Christian philosophers and historians—to be ‘Days of the LORD,’ in which he has come to judge the earth ; and partial anticipations of the last judgment of the world. The wealth and rank of the criminals shall not save them : though they tower above their fellows, as the cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Basan (of which they build their palaces) tower above the common shrubs ; though they stand like their native mountains, and like the fortifications which they have added to those mountains in defiance of all invaders ; though they are prepared to resist the storms of fortune like the great merchant ships by which they have amassed their wealth, and gratified every desire for luxury ;* yet all shall be brought down to the dust. They shall vainly seek to escape, as unarmed peasants or women fly into the nearest cave or hole when they hear the hoofs of some plundering tribe of Edom or Ishmael from the desert : but the judgment of Jehovah shall reach them, as the earthquake (then, as now, not uncommon in Judæa) would bring down the rock on him who sought refuge in it.

* The words ‘images of desire’ might mean idols:—(compare chapters i. 29, xlv. 9 with Genesis iii. 6. ; Levit. xxvi. 1. ; Numb. xxxiii. 52.) but the parallelism makes it more probable that they describe either the gay flags and sails and gilded work of the ships (‘the poop was beaten gold. purple the sails . . the oars were silver’), or the objects of luxury which their owners traded in. The phrase ‘ships of Tarshish’ (Tartessus in Spain), applied to merchant-ships which could only have traded in the south, is exactly like our usage of ‘China cups,’ ‘Japan trays,’ &c.

And as such fugitives carry in their hands their most precious goods, but are glad in their extremity to abandon these to the moles and bats of the caves, that they may more freely use their hands in clambering into the safe recesses, so the idolatrous nation shall be obliged to abandon its false gods. Such is man, when his trust is in idols, and when Jehovah is not upholding, but opposing, him.

The prophet now proceeds to tell, in literal and detailed language, of the national calamities he has just before described metaphorically ; and to declare the worthlessness of man's political devices to stay the ruin. At the time Isaiah spoke, the nation and its capital city and seat of government might seem to the worldly-wise too firmly established to fear the wrath, or need the help, of a God whom they had forgotten as a dream among the realities of life. The fortified frontiers and the standing army might not have been tested for some time, but doubtless they were as invincible as in the days of the great Uzziah ; and Judah's power was not merely in its army, but still more in its civilization, in its system of laws, its religious and political culture, its statesmen versed in affairs, its feudal aristocracy, its ranks and dignities, its manufacturing skill and industry, and its diviners and soothsayers. How could such a state be in any danger ? So argued the shrewd man of the world in Isaiah's day, just as he still does in our own. He could not see that the soldiers were a set of machines incapable of standing against an invasion of men full of fierce life ; that the law was so administered as to be an engine of oppression instead of justice ; that the prophets, the teachers of the people, employed their gifts and opportunities of teaching—just as the advocates and judges did theirs—to prove good to be evil and evil good, to justify prosperous wickedness, and to undermine all faith in moral and political righteousness. But Isaiah foresees that a slight irregularity in the working of this vast machinery of imposture will throw the whole into confusion. It may hold together for the life of the present king (though even his matured state-craft had no doubt done more than it could hope to do again), but the life and death of rulers are among the events which God

retains in his own power ; and when the weak and worthless youth Ahaz sits on the throne of his fathers, and like Rehoboam of old forsakes the old statesmen, and ‘consults with the young men that were grown up with him,’ and were like himself mere boys in mind and character even more than in age—when God gives children to be their princes and babes to rule over them, it will be seen what their boasted order of society is worth.* The sovereign authority having fallen into powerless hands, there will be nothing to restrain the strong man from oppressing his weaker neighbour, or the foolish and the base from triumph over the wise and the honourable. Foreign invasion shall take advantage of this internal disorder, and the heads of tribes and families, the centres of Jewish political life, being killed or carried into captivity, there will be a general dissolution of society ; and when, under the sense of this calamity, a man shall try and restore order and unity by calling on his elder brother—on whom devolve the rights and duties of the absent father—to take up his position as that father’s representative, and to become a binder-up of their wounds, then will he refuse with the selfishness of despair, declaring that the ruin is too great to be repaired, and that he himself is too much sunk under it even to make the attempt.† How the men who heard these words of Isaiah experienced their truth a few years after, we learn from 2 Chron. xxviii., xxix. 6—9. They were again fulfilled in the reign of Manasseh ; and again far more heavily in the days of Jeremiah, whose Prophecy and Lamentations describe the famine ; the loss of all who could have given aid by vision, counsel, or the sword ; the imbecility of the king, who dared not rule according to the dictates of his own conscience or judg-

* ‘Fire and slaughter raged on all sides. The country [Normandy during the minority of William the Conqueror], formerly most flourishing, was now torn with intestine broils, and divided at the pleasure of the plunderers ; so that it was justly entitled to proclaim, “Woe to the land whose sovereign is a child.”’—*William of Malmesbury*, iii.

“Tis much when sceptres are in children’s hands,
But more when envy breeds unkind division ;
Then comes the ruin, then begins confusion.”

First Part of King Henry VI., iv. 1.

† Compare the corresponding state of the kingdom of Samaria, at the period ; *Isaiah*, ix. 17—20 ; *Hosea*, vii. 1—7.

ment, but himself avowed that 'the king was not he who could do anything against' the people about him ; the tyranny of the great men during these calamities ; and the general depravity and dissolution of all moral and political order. If we compare the prophecy and history of the one period with those of the other, and both with like periods in the history of other nations (as, for instance, before the French or English Revolutions, not to speak of still later times), we see how the prophets announced the eternal and immutable *laws* of God's government of the world, to be again and again brought into operation, and accomplished, in the events of successive ages.

The prophet will not for a moment lose sight of the moral character of these national calamities ; each fresh prediction of them is followed by the declaration that they are 'the fruit of their doings,' 'the reward of their hands:'—'Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The show of their countenance is against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not.'

The selfish aristocracy have abandoned all their proper—patriarchal and paternal—duties to their people, for the business of wringing from them the means of unbounded luxury. This was a consequence of the commercial spirit absorbing the aristocratic or patriarchal element which ought to have limited and purified it. Commerce is perhaps one of the most dangerous, as well as one of the most important, of national developments. Its good is as real as its evil ; it is in many obvious respects a far better source and occasion for national and international activity than its only substitute, war : but the thoughtful student of history and politics does not need to be told that even war has sometimes proved more humanizing than commerce ; and still less, that the latter as certainly as the former turns to mere corruption and political degeneracy, if it be not duly balanced by other elements of national life.* And if modern philo-

* 'The philosophical thinkers on politics,' says Mr. Grote, 'conceived (and to a great degree justly, as I shall show hereafter), that the conditions of security in the ancient world imposed upon the citizens generally the abso-

sophy is right in considering that each of the nations of antiquity were fitted to exhibit the separate working of one or two of the more elementary laws of politics, though not to afford a field for those vast and complicated problems which modern societies have to solve, then was Moses right in making laws to discourage the money-making spirit and practice of which the results would be such as Isaiah here denounces; results quite preclusive of the effectual development of that idea which it was the very end of the existence of the Hebrew polity to develop.

Connected with the grasping, money-loving spirit of the great and rich men is that of pampered luxury in the women. The nobleman has substituted mere greedy blood-sucking with the forms of law for a kind paternal care and guidance of his dependants; and the lady has turned that feminine delicacy and gentleness which she should have employed in refining and humanizing the relations of domestic life, and thence spreading its influence throughout society, into haughty exclusiveness and a love of dress and luxury, gradually degenerating to sensuality and licentiousness.

It always seems to me that Isaiah marks the fact of the social importance of the Hebrew women (which we otherwise know to have been so much more like that of the Roman than the Greek matron), and his own mournful though indignant sense of what high dignity and duty they had abandoned, in the prominence which he gives to the subject by his elaborate description of the luxury of the daughters of Zion. We see before us the Jewish ladies, 'walking and mincing as they go,' with haughtily tossed head, and wanton eyes, and hear the tinkling of the mimic fetters of gold with which their ankles are encircled; they wear the fine white linen of Egypt, and their long robes are rich with embroidery; the turban shows its

lute necessity of keeping up a military spirit and willingness to brave at all times personal hardship and discomfort; so that increase of wealth, on account of the habits of self-indulgence which it commonly introduces, was regarded by them with more or less of disfavour.'—*History of Greece*, iii. 151. And again:—'There was a considerable body of ancient sentiment, and that, too, among high-minded and intelligent men, which regarded gold and silver as a cause of mischief and corruption, and of which the stanza of Horace (Od. iii. iii. 49) is an echo—'Aurum irreperitum,' &c.'—*Ibid.* ix. 320.

wearer's taste, or the open network the beauty of her hair; the large veil, the ancient dress of the modest Hebrew woman of every rank, is now adapted to the fashion of the day, or superseded by the lighter mantilla of lace or gauze thrown gracefully over the head and shoulders; each face glistens with ear-drops and nose-jewels; from the chains about each neck hang the ornamental crescent, the amulet with its magical characters graven on the gem, the little mirror, or the scent-box; or we notice another capricious fashion, where a purse is fastened to the broad girdle of silk embroidered with gold, and the mirror is carried in a hand loaded with bracelets and rings. We turn to look again, and the squalid filth and disease of poverty and the prison are before us:—'Instead of perfume there is stench, and instead of a girdle a rope, and instead of well-set hair baldness, and instead of a costly robe a girding of sackcloth, and branding instead of beauty.'

The prophet seems to answer (in verse 25) the incredulous question, How can this ever be; what danger is there of its befalling us? As though he had said, You are living in worldliness and selfishness, in the neglect of all relationships, and you shall feel what it is to be stripped of them all, when your husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers fall in battle, that you may know what you are out of the order in which God has placed you, and which you have renounced. When those of you who still remain in your desolate homes are sitting in sackcloth and ashes in token of your grief; or, still worse, when your foreheads are scarred by the slave-master's brand, when your rich apparel is stripped off by your ruthless captors, and when the sun beats on your heads, from which they have cut your hair, and you sink with hunger, thirst, weariness, and degradation, while driven naked and like herds of cattle in the train of the conquerors who have laid waste your homes,—then you shall know that it is Jehovah who 'hath made bald the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and discovered their shame.'*

Then he turns abruptly from the daughters, to the

* See further as to the treatment of captives in war, on Isaiah xx., and compare Euripides *Troad*: 141 ff., quoted by Knobel.

Daughter, of Zion, gathering them together in their proper representative, the licentious and rebellious nation, the faithless bride of the Holy One of Israel. He employs no arguments to prove the connection between the selfish luxury of the women and the decay of public virtue : their consciences cannot deny that their sin is both a cause and an effect of the national unrighteousness, and to their conscience he appeals direct, by simply announcing the impending judgment :—‘Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war :’—and the gates of Jerusalem, the places of resort for business or for pleasure, which now resound with the cheerful hum of prosperous throngs, shall echo with the voice of the bereaved, the destitute, or the captive, filling the air (as the manner of eastern nations was and is) with their wailings ; and She, the widowed and childless City, shall sit upon the ground, as mourners used to sit, and as she was represented eight hundred years afterwards (and may still be seen), on the medals of her conquerors, Vespasian and Titus.

The Jewess, like the ancient Roman, or modern English, woman, was called by her husband’s name ; and she prized the honour of wedlock, and dreaded the reproach of childlessness, at least as much as either of these ; but we must contrast the dignified expression of these feelings by Sarah, Hannah, and Elizabeth, nay, even that of the jealous and petulant Rachel, with the exhibition which the prophet now contemplates in his mind’s eye, in order to see the picture of social disorganization which he sees. If a harem of wives and concubines was still a part of the king’s state in Isaiah’s time, though we have no proof of this, it is quite improbable that polygamy was the common custom of the nation, or that they had not long passed out of the half-civilized condition and habits for which Moses had provided, in his laws for the protection of the female slaves whom a man might take at the same time for his wives : but now Isaiah says that these women, whose luxury and pride he has just described, will abandon even the natural reserve of their sex, and not only force themselves several upon one man, but declare that they will be content to share with each other a legalized concubinage in which they will

not claim the concubine's ancient right of bread and apparel, which the old law* had, in express terms, secured to her, if only they may bear his name.† It need not be supposed that Isaiah anticipated the literal fulfilment of his words; we shall probably understand him better by taking this as an instance of that poetic or rhetorical hyperbole, which he so delights to use for the more forcible expression of his moral and political teaching. The mystery which some commentators have seen in the numbers 'seven' and 'one' in this passage, and which is even said to have occasioned the separation of this portion of the prophecy into a distinct chapter, perhaps makes worth while the obvious remark that it is nothing more than the wide-spread idiom of modern as well as ancient languages, by which a definite or round number is put for an indefinite. Seven is thus generally used by the Hebrews for any considerable number, as it was among the Egyptians and Persians, and is still said to be in the East. The Moguls are said to employ nine in like manner. So in English we put five, or ten, for any small, and a hundred for a large, number, in conversation; though the genius of our language forbids such idioms in graver discourse.

In that day, out of this utter desolation shall arise the glory and beauty of those last days with the description of which the prophet began his discourse. It is possible (as some commentators suppose) that the words 'branch of Jehovah' and 'fruit of the earth' are only variations of the image to express the same thought of the restored nation. But it is more probable that there is a parallelism of contrast, and that the branch of Jehovah is the deliverer and ruler of the nation, while the latter only is intended by the fruit of the earth. This is certainly the meaning of this image of 'the branch' in Isaiah's subsequent words—'There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots,' &c.;—in Jeremiah's—'Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I

* Exod. xxi. 10.

† Grotius quotes Lucan (*Pharsal.* ii. 342):—

' . . . da tantum nomen inane
Connubii; liceat tumulo scripsisse Catonis
Marcia.'

will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute justice and judgment,' &c. ;—and in Zechariah's—'Behold the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of Jehovah, and he shall bear the glory,' &c.*

But we have a fuller, more philosophical light, to aid this verbal criticism. We find traces in all the earlier records of the Hebrew faith and history of the expectation of an incarnate representative of the invisible LORD God of Israel; we see how it gradually becomes to Isaiah (as I hope the following pages will help to show at large), and to his contemporaries and successors, the master-thought and light of their faith and teaching, to which they hold fast, though their individual anticipations of the manner of its fulfilment are again and again baffled, when the event shows that a Hezekiah, or Zerubbabel, or son of Josedech, is *not* the Branch; and, lastly, we know when and how this expectation of Israel for themselves and mankind has been at last fulfilled. And thus (if I may use the correct, though perhaps pedantic, phrase), we can explain the particular fact by the universal law, and recognize in the words before us an early dawning, in or to the mind of Isaiah himself, of the great idea of all prophecy.

Then follows the description of the restored and the reformed, though humbled and diminished, nation, where the allusion, in the words 'every one that is written among the living,' to the public registry which was kept not only of the numbers but of the genealogies of the citizens,† indicates the political feeling of the prophet—his sense that it was the nation, and not merely a number of pious individuals, that should be restored. It is a common observation, verified alike in great national calamities and in ordinary pauperism, that misery of itself tends to make men not better but more vicious; and accordingly it is not a mere judgment and execution on the bloody men and sensual women of Jerusalem that Isaiah foretells, but

* Chap. xi. 1; Jerem. xxiii. 5; Zech. vi. 12.

† Compare Exod. xxx. 12; Exod. xxxiii. 32; Numbers i. 2, 18; 1 Chron. v. 17; Psalm lxix. 28; Jerem. xxii. 30; Ezek. xiii. 9.

a moral purification of the nation, wrought by Jehovah, and by his spirit, through these means. Their sin had alike infected their family and their political life; but now a new and holy spirit shall be revived in every household, and in the 'assemblies' of the citizens whether meeting at the temple worship or the preaching of a prophet,* at the ecclesiastical feasts or national fairs, at the tribunals of the king or the judges sitting in the gate, or on other occasions when they seem to have had a real (though according to modern European notions, irregular) voice in the legislation and government. God himself will bring about this restoration, showing himself to be the present Lord of the nation, as he was when he led their fathers,—the 'tribes of Israel' and the 'congregation of Jehovah,'—by the pillar of cloud and of fire; and he will protect and defend 'the glory,'†—this glorious restoration of his Name which he has effected—as a tent shelters the traveller, or the booth of branches the vine-dresser, from the sun or the storm, or as the same pillar of cloud or fire defended the hosts of Israel from the pursuing enemy or the burning noonday heat.

* They seem to have preached regularly on Sabbaths and New-moons :—2 Kings iv. 23. See above, page 36, note.

† 'For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.'—Zechariah ii. 5.

CHAPTER IV.

ISAIAH V.—COMING WOES.—FUSING POWER OF IMAGINATION.—HEBREW IDYLL.
ANCIENT FERTILITY OF JUDÆA.—PRESENT BARRENNESS.—THE VINEYARD
OF THE LORD OF HOSTS.—SELFISHNESS IN AN ARISTOCRACY.—RIGHTS AND
DUTIES OF LANDOWNERS.—PROPERTY A TRUST.—HEBREW AND ENGLISH
LAWS OF ENTAIL.—WORD AND WORK OF JEHOVAH.—GOD A CONSTITU-
TIONAL RULER.—ABUSE OF WORDS BY WORLDLY MEN.—THUCYDIDES.—
FULFILMENT OF ISAIAH'S THREATS—TO HIS CONTEMPORARIES—AND TO ALL
AGES SINCE.—GROTIUS ON PROPHECY.

THE contents of this discourse show it to belong to the same period as the two preceding ones ; but perhaps we may see some indications that it properly follows them, as being of rather a later date. The gloom of the approaching calamities is deeper, and in addition to the previous pictures of the effects of foreign invasion, we have now a description of the invaders themselves, and of their coming, hardly less explicit than when the prophet speaks of them by name to king Ahaz, in chapter vii. verse 18.

The last prophecy began with an apologue of 'the Last Days ;' this opens with a like poetical picture of the former and the present times of Israel. Isaiah seems for a moment to think of Zion as in the days of her first love, when she still called Jehovah 'her Beloved ;' and in her name he begins to speak :—and then, in the rapid transitions which succeed, we have one of the instances, almost as frequent in Isaiah as in Shakspeare or Milton, of that true poet's imagination, which does not merely collect and arrange a succession of beautiful thoughts but fuses them into one homogeneous whole, though they may be so diverse that less skilful hands could hardly bring them together. The Hebrew Pastoral or Idyll, as we see in the Canticles, chooses the imagery of the vineyard rather than

that of the sheepfold. The Jewish poets embody their ideal of a happy life in the sitting under their own vine and under their own fig-tree; and this 'Song of the Beloved and his vineyard,' gives a lively picture of what a vineyard was.* 'Apertos Bacchus amat colles;' and this vineyard is on the side of a hill, of which the Hebrew expresses the fertility by calling it 'a horn the son of oil or fatness.' Oil may here be used metaphorically for fertility, or the vineyards of Palestine may have been planted with olive trees, which would at once support the vines and supply a fruit of their own; and if there were any other trace in the Hebrew books of the belief that the olive increased the fruitfulness of the vine when they grew together, we might suppose an allusion to it here. Lowth and other commentators illustrate the word 'horn' by instances of the same and like metaphors in other languages. We call a promontory a cape or head, and the Turks a nose; a ridge in Latin is *dorsum*; *Brundisium*, which, according to Strabo, signifies a stag's head in the ancient language of the country, is described by Lucan as stretching out a tongue and horns into the Adriatic. Solinus says that the south of Italy divides into two horns, and Camden that 'Cornwall is called by the inhabitants, in the British tongue, Kernaw, as lessening by degrees like a horn, running out into promontories like so many horns.' So Statius has *Cornu Parnassi*, and the Swiss have such names as *Buchhorn*, *Schreckhorn*, for mountains. And so Demetrius told Philip, that 'the hill Ithomè (with its citadel of Messenè) and the Acrocorinthus, were the two horns of the Peloponnesus, which he who held was master of the bull.'† Lowth farther observes, with his wonted taste, that 'Whoever has considered the descriptions given of Mount Tabor, and the views of it which are to be seen in books of travels; its regular conic form rising singly in a plain to a great height from a base small in proportion; its beauty and fertility to the very

* 'Schulz states that he supped under a vine whose stem was about a foot and a half in diameter, its height about thirty feet, while its branches and branchlets, which had to be supported, formed a tent of upwards of thirty feet square.'—Kitto's *Bibl. Cyclop.*, art. *Vine*.

† Polyb. vii. 11, quoted in Grote's *History of Greece*, x. 309.

top, will have a good idea of, 'a horn the son of oil.' 'The land of Israel was once a fertile as well as a mountainous country: Moses calls it 'the mountain of thine (God's) inheritance'* and 'that goodly mountain;'+ and afterwards describes it as 'a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass: . . . a land which Jehovah thy God careth for: the eyes of Jehovah thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.'‡ The eyes of Jehovah have ceased to be upon it; the curse has been as truly fulfilled as once the blessing; and the traveller now finds the mountains returned to their natural barrenness, though still bearing traces of long-abandoned cultivation. The way in which the change has been effected is thus lucidly explained by Dr. Kitto:—'Judæa, the southern part of Palestine, is a country full of hills and valleys, conformably to the Scriptural intimations. The hills are generally separated from one another by valleys and torrents, and are for the most part of moderate height, uneven, and seldom of any regular figure. The rock of which they are composed is easily converted into soil; which, being arrested by terraces when washed down by the rains, renders the hills cultivable in a series of long narrow gardens formed by these terraces from the base upwards. Thus, the hills were cultivated in former times most abundantly; and were enriched and beautified with the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine; and thus the limited cultivation which now subsists is still carried on. But when the inhabitants were rooted out and cultivation abandoned the terraces fell to decay, and the soil which had collected on them was washed down into the valleys, leaving only the arid rock, naked and desolate. This is the general character: but in some parts the hills are beautifully wooded; and in others, the application of the

* Exod. xv. 17.

† Deut. iii. 25.

‡ Deut. viii. 7—9, xi. 12.

ancient mode of cultivation—under which the valleys are covered with corn while the terraced hills are clothed with fig-trees, olive-trees, or vines—suggests to the traveller how rich this country once was and still might be, and how beautiful was the aspect which it offered. All these characteristics of desolation apply with peculiar force to that portion of Judæa which formed the inheritance of Benjamin. Its most favourably situated mountains are wholly uncultivated; and perhaps in no other country is such a mass of rock exhibited without an atom of soil.*

I believe that in a poetical allegory there is always more or less of allusion to the details of that which is allegorised; but it is only allusion,—to be realized by the imagination, rather than by the understanding, of the reader, as well as of the poet. The several images are parts of a picture, which must be contemplated as a picture, and its meaning is to enter into the mind through the imagination. Still, a matter-of-fact commentator, like Vitringa, deeply imbued with the spirit of his author, will sometimes greatly help his reader's imagination by his minute analysis: and I think this is the case in his explanation of the details of this description of the vineyard.—A vineyard consists of vines planted for the sake of their fruit: the Hebrew nation with its tribes, its families, and its persons, was such a vineyard, appointed to bring forth the fruits of personal and social religion and virtue,—holiness, righteousness, and love to God and man: this nation was established in a land flowing with milk and honey, endowed with all natural advantages, all circumstances which could favour inward life by outward prosperity; and the grace and favour of Jehovah, and the influences of his spirit, always symbolized by oil, were continually causing it to be fruitful: 'And he fenced it,'†—the arm of the LORD of hosts, employing kings and heroes, was its defence against all enemies: its institutions

* *Physical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 32, 33.

† I leave Vitringa's rendering of *קִיַּץ* which is also that of the LXX. the Vulgate, our Authorized Version, and of Jarchi, Kimchi, and Rosenmüller, and which suits verse 5: but if the usual modern reading—'dugged'—is to be preferred we might interpret it to mean that the long-hardened soil was broken up by the mattock and the spade of Joshua and his armies.

were fitted to preserve internal order, and to prevent the admixture of evil from without, with the chosen and separated nation; and its territory was marked out and protected by natural boundaries in a noticeable manner: 'And gathered out the stones,'—the heathen nations, and the stocks and stones they worshipped: 'And planted it with the choicest vine,'—a nation of the noble stock of the patriarchs, and chosen and cultivated by the Lord of the vineyard, with especial care, for his own use: 'And built a tower in it,'—namely, Jerusalem—for the protection and superintendence of the vineyard, as well as to be its farmhouse, so to speak: 'And also made a wine-press therein,'—where the wine-press seems to point to the same idea as the sending the servants to receive the fruit in our Lord's modification of this parable: lawgivers, kings, and judges, the temple with its priesthood and ordinances, and the schools of the prophets, were the appointed means for pressing out and receiving the wine—the spiritual virtues and graces of the vineyard.* And the end is, that 'He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.'

The master of the vineyard appeals to the inhabitant of Jerusalem, as to an impartial stranger, to judge what more could have been done for the vineyard; and to approve his decision as to what shall be done, when the stock of the choicest vine† has turned out to produce nothing but wild, or crab, grapes, after all the culture bestowed on it: it is worthy of nothing but to be laid waste, and this is what he will do to it. And then, by a transition which brings the whole image into union with

* Grotius, following Jerome, explains the wine-press by the altar with its blood of sacrifices.

† 'Yet I had planted thee a noble vine (here, as in our text, שֵׁרֶץ a peculiarly choice kind), wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?' Jeremiah ii. 21. Lysias, in the place quoted above (page 2), attributes the 'noble and wonderful deeds' of the Athenians to their noble stock as well as to their political wisdom:—*Καὶ γὰρ τοὶ καὶ φύντες καλῶς καὶ γρόντες ὅμοια, κ.τ.λ.* He just before explains this noble birth to be their autochthony, which had enabled their political existence to be a just one from the very first, instead of being founded, in the ordinary way, on the violent expulsion of a previous race. The same idea is recognized by the Hebrews in their habitual claim to their land as the land of their father Abraham. How far this was, or was not, the ground of their rights, I shall notice hereafter.

that which it represents, after the utterance of what an earthly master of a vineyard might do, follows, 'I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it;'—which reminds us that it is the LORD of hosts who is speaking, and that his vineyard is the House of Israel. The men of Judah, who were the plants of his choice and delight, have brought him the fruits of their mere sinful nature, instead of those of his election and grace: 'He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry:' and the inhabitant of Jerusalem, who had been appealed to, as an impartial judge between the vineyard and its master, hears the still voice of his own reason and conscience pronouncing to him, as it did to the pharisee who listened to the same parable eight hundred years afterwards, 'Thou art the man.'

Selfishness, or the making self the centre to which all things are to tend, is the great sin in all ages and peoples. As soon as national institutions have awakened the sense of personality and the feeling of self-respect, the desire of accumulating wealth grows with them. And in no form is it more liable to abuse than in connection with the possession of land. Men desire, by an almost universal instinct, to possess property in land, with its healthy occupations and interests, so varied and multiplied by the living powers of nature, and with its important political and social rights which grow up with the duties which are specially connected with it; for this kind of property demands the fulfilment of more, and more obvious duties than any other, while it confers corresponding rights and powers by bringing a man into more complete personal relationship with his neighbours than is possible in the crowd of cities and the whirl of city trades. Yet, since the land cannot be increased in quantity, its possession by one man is the exclusion of another, and the Hebrew laws endeavoured to meet this difficulty by special provisions, the breach or evasion of which the prophet now denounces in his first 'woe' on the selfish landowner. He who can join house to house, and lay field to field, when he knows, and long has known, face to face, the very man, wife, and child whom he has dispossessed, and can drive

out by his own simple act his fellow-men to be desolate in their poverty, in order that he may be alone in his riches, may expect a punishment proportioned to his crime. Such men were the nobles of Judah and Israel throughout the land ; and the prophet heard, ringing in his ears, the declaration of Jehovah, the King of the land, that the great and fair palaces should become as desolate as the peasants' and yeomen's cottages which had made place for them :—the vineyard of ten acres shall yield but eight gallons of wine, and the corn-field shall give back but a tenth part of the seed sown in it.

The Hebrew constitution, true to its patriarchal origin, provided largely for that element of national life which the Jews marked by the name of 'tribe,' and which we usually call 'feudal,' or 'aristocratic,' but which is properly the element of family life as distinguished from the several other elements—industrious, intellectual, moral, religious—which have all their appropriate political forms of embodiment, and which together unite in one constitution, or body-politic. The feudal institutions in the middle ages were not merely arrangements for providing the kings with soldiers, but a complex organization of patriarchal government, in which, if the tenure of the landowner's occasional military service to the king was more palpable, it was not more real, nor more important an element of national life and progress than the daily performance of his and his wife's and children's personal and social duties to their vassals. And there was an analogous combination of military service and civil duty to the state in the tribal institutions of the Hebrews. This aristocracy of the Hebrew tribes, too, was directly connected with the land, which they held by inalienable hereditary tenure of the invisible King who declared the land to be his.* Political philosophy has much to say in favour of laws and institutions, at certain periods of a nation's growth, for encouraging, or at least permitting, the disposition of its members to found families, to be maintained by hereditary possessions in land. Yet, if this disposition be not kept within bounds, those who are influenced by it will 'join house to house,

* Levit. xxv. 23.

and field to field, till there be no place ;' till the race of small landholders, yeomen, and partly independent tenants, is swallowed up by a few rich despots. To prevent this evil among the Hebrews, Moses directed as equal a division of the land as possible in the first instance, among the 600,000 families who originally formed the nation ; and provided against the permanent alienation of any estate, by giving a right of repurchase to the seller and his relations, and of repossession without purchase at the Jubilee.^{*} The story of Naboth† illustrates the effect of these laws in forming an order of sturdy independent yeomen ; but it must also be taken as an instance of the habitual breach of the same laws by the rich and powerful,‡ as they in like manner disobeyed that respecting the liberation of slaves at the Jubilee.§ In England, where the Norman conquest accumulated all the land in the hands of a few nobles, the like accumulation has been opposed—however imperfectly—by laws in their form exactly opposite to those of Moses ;—by the permission to cut off old entails, and the prohibition to make new ones except for one generation, and by allowing land to be bought and sold like other commodities. The Hebrew constitution provided by law for the preservation of the old families, while our constitution at the same time that it gives them the means of sustaining themselves with even the most ordinary internal virtue and energy, permits them, if they become effete and worthless, to give way to new and more vigorous houses, which have raised themselves out of the ranks below ; and thus new blood is continually infused into the old organization of the state.

The course of social changes is for the most part noiseless in England ; but those who look into the reasons why estates pass from old to new owners can see that those reasons are mainly moral ones :—that when a man has to sell the home of his fathers it is almost always because he or they had ceased to understand and to acknowledge that they held it on the tenure of social duties. All

* Numb. xxvi. Josh. xiii—xix. Levit. xxv. 8—11, 23—28.

† 1 Kings xxi. 1—24.

‡ Compare Micah ii. 2 ; Nehem. v. 1—13 ; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.

§ Jer. xxxiv. 8—16.

property whatever is doubtless a trust ; but the principle always has been, and always must be, more clearly illustrated in landed than in any other property ; and this not less by the efforts of selfish men to deny than of good men to assert it. I do not indeed say nor think that our existing laws are as effectual as they might be for securing the change from bad to good landowners : they require too little, and they permit too much. Yet if we review the growth of opinion and of law in the matter, we see that in as far as the feudal spirit was true to itself it taught the English lord to hold that it was the mark, not of the Christian gentleman but of the usurer and the alien, to have a merely selfish right in property which he could call his own : and when the gentleman borrowed the usurer's money, and then pleaded his family's inalienable right to its land in bar of repayment, we were happily drawing towards a stage of our history in which the law was strong enough to assert its majesty against even the statute-makers of the time being, and to teach them that they had duties to usurers and aliens, as well as to their own families and vassals.* Then the judge upon the bench showed himself more than a match in the cause of justice for the baron in parliament : and now, when our ways of effecting our ends have become very different, though the ends themselves—of social duty or of selfishness—are still the same, the latest developments of the science of political economy are still preparing for new results in the forms suited to this age. For they are proving that while an old and civilized state like ours has a deep interest—perhaps that of its very existence—in the maintenance of each individual's legal property in his

* I refer, of course, to the subtle legal construction by which the judges, in Edward IV.'s reign, gave the first deadly blow to the statute *De Donis*, 13 Edw. I. c. 1. The barons thought by that law effectually to prevent any future alienation of their estates from their respective families. But after throwing out hints in the long interval as to what could be done, the judges under Edward IV. decided that an 'estate-tail' could be effectually converted into a 'fee-simple,' by the fiction of 'common recovery.' The king may have sanctioned or connived at this decision, with a view to break the power of traitor-barons the easier ; but when we remember the growing spirit of independence in the educated class, and the increased importance of trade, there seems little doubt that the judges were conscious of the higher motive of compelling even nobles to pay their debts and leave off trampling on the middle classes.

estate, it has an equally deep interest in his using his property in the way most beneficial to the community ; and a public and indefeasible right, limited only by considerations of practical expediency, to enforce that use by any necessary means.* And he who trusts that in our national progress we shall never cease to add new things to the old, and yet not destroy anything old while its life and uses still remain, will not doubt that opinion and sentiment, law and custom, will still continue to meet these questions of the tenure of land wisely and justly, and in the interest of the whole nation. It may be thought strange to doubt the existence of a 'natural right' of property ; but I believe that, if we look quietly to the bottom of the matter, we shall see that the ordinary assertion of such a right is partly a misapplication of abstract reason to a subject which lies altogether within the region of positive institutions, historical experience, and the calculations of expediency ; and partly a selfish animal instinct, which reveals its true nature by its rage and fear at any alarm of losing its material possessions, and by the resolution which it then shows to defend these by all that physical force of police and soldiers, for the organization of which alone society seems to it to exist. 'Right, in its most proper sense, is the creature of law and statute, and only in the technical language of the courts has it any substantial and independent sense. In morals, right is a word without meaning, except as the correlative of duty.'†

The rich men whom Isaiah sees around him grasp wealth that they may expend it in luxury ; and at last in the

* See especially the chapters on landed property in Mr. J. Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*. Mr. Chichester Fortescue, in his Irish Land Act, has recognized and embodied, with true political genius, these relations of the individual landowner and the community—as to which another Irish statesman, Mr. Drummond, had previously asserted that property has its duties as well as its rights.

† Coleridge's *Lay Sermons*, p. 66, edit. 1852.—I have purposely adopted, as to the 'natural right' of property, Coleridge's argument, and almost his words, as to Jacobinism, which all agree is the assertion of man's 'natural right' to power. It is instructive to be reminded how ultra-conservatism and ultra-liberalism agree in appealing to 'natural rights' instead of to the positive laws of an historical constitution,—to the petty individual reason, instead of to the universal reason, which, because it is universal, can only manifest itself in successive historical developments.

most sensual forms of luxury,—drinking and revelling. As in another age, the old Roman, who touched nothing, least of all ardent drinks, till the ninth hour of the day,* was succeeded by the race who could boast with Horace,—

‘Est qui nec veteris pocula Massici,
Nec partem solido demere de die
Spernit;’

so the land of Israel has fallen from the blest state in which its princes “ate not in the morning, but in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness;† and we see men ‘That put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near: that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall: that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David: that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the choicest ointments: but are not grieved with the affliction of Joseph.’‡ And thus embruted, they have lost all sense of there being any divine order and government of the world, for have they not even obliterated the natural distinctions of healthy appetite, and of night and day? They cannot retain any glimmering of that which God had revealed to their nation above all other nations, and was still telling them by the mouth of his prophets,—that the whole world, social no less than natural, the heavens as well as the earth, had been created according to the designs conceived in the eternal mind of God himself, of which mind the declaration and explanation is called by the Hebrews his ‘Word,’ the actual realization of the design his ‘Work,’ and the various processes by which he is effecting that realization the ‘Operation of his hands,’ while the ultimate end of the whole is named the ‘Glory of God.’§

They have no knowledge either of the Word or the Work of Jehovah: they lack that which alone could save

* ‘They always ate but once a day, and that was in the evening.’—Description of the Golden Age in King Alfred’s *Boethius*, S. Turner’s *Hist. of England*, ii. 36.

† Eccles. x. 17.

‡ Amos vi. 3—6, where the prophet is speaking of the same Jewish nobles.

§ Compare Psalms xxxiii. 4, xcii. 4, 5, cxi. 2—8, lxiv. 9, 10, xxviii. 5 lxxvii. 12—14.

them, which alone has upheld any nation, in any age or clime. Their feasting and drunkenness are about to be succeeded by thirst and famine ; by an indefinite, hopeless, desolation of the whole land, dark and deep as death and the grave ; so that hell, with its insatiable maw, shall be the only banqueter, and its food the hopes and life as well as the bodies of men.

The nation has forgotten God—Jehovah living and reigning among them ; they are sunk into selfish, carnal ease, trusting in their riches and glory, and in the apparent stability of their civil and ecclesiastical institutions. Therefore Jehovah summons this carnal glory, and the men who trust in it, to judgment, to try what there is in it, whether it has anything by which it can stand without his help ; and then they will see by the judgment and its execution (which will be according to truth and righteousness), that all their glorious endowments were given them by God as witnesses of himself, and means whereby to attain to the knowledge of him, but that apart from him they have no worth. This judgment began to come upon the men whom Isaiah addressed, in the reign of Ahaz, soon after the delivery of the warning ; but in order fully to understand it, we must (as in the case of all other prophecies) look at it in the light of the whole subsequent history of the Jews, and of Christendom. In the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, Christ and his Apostles saw the selfish and carnal nation brought to its last trial and righteously condemned, and the sentence carried into execution by that Man whom God had appointed to judge the world. They declared, and the event, spread over successive centuries, has proved the truth of the declaration, that God was bringing down the mean man and the mighty man alike throughout the world, and exalting himself and his Son, setting his Name up in the world, and causing it to triumph over all opposition. Modern history and science have become so vast and complicated, alike as to the facts and the laws which govern those facts, that we cannot realize the belief in the judgments of God upon nations in the simple way in which the old prophets, or even our own forefathers, did. Yet we may find that the

old faith is capable of reconciliation with our new knowledge and our doubts arising out of the discovery how incomplete that knowledge is, if we can rise to the apprehension of God as a constitutional and not a despotic king, who not merely puts forth his power from time to time, to prevent or punish flagrant crimes, but who is steadily governing us by fixed laws, and administering settled institutions. Though men may slavishly dread an arbitrary will, they can never feel for it that salutary fear which is the beginning of wisdom; and unless we believe that God's judgments are righteous—that they are a part of the steady administration of a polity—as well as good in their effects, it will be impossible for us to keep long from superstition, or its opposite, scepticism. And, therefore, we may see the germ of a true historical and political philosophy in the prophet's repeated assertion, that God is exalted in executing *justice*, and sanctified in *righteousness*. The 'sanctifying God' is the recognizing and worshipping him as holy and separate from all other gods, and the renouncing and denying all others as false gods. This shall be the result of Jehovah's judgments: and the prophet contemplates the judgment and the reformation with a chastened contentment, while he pictures the once richly cultivated fields as become a pasture for lambs, and the lands of the selfish nobles, after being desolated by the invader, as now restored to a humble peace by the presence of the wandering shepherds, those friendly strangers, Rechabites or Kenites, who still appeared from time to time in the plains of Palestine with their flocks, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had themselves done in old times, when they too were strangers (the same word) in the land of the Canaanites. Lowth and Ewald follow LXX. in reading גֵּרִים 'kids,' for נָכָרִים 'strangers;' but there seems no need to emend the Hebrew text for the sake of a mere verbal parallelism. Nor is it necessary to decide whether we are to give a literal or an allegorical meaning to this verse, for the one image into which the two are fused is the only adequate counterpart to the event: the lands wasted by the inroads and invasions which followed the delivery of this prophecy were no doubt pastured by flocks that were

owned by others than the former landlords ; and the rule of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and their rich and selfish nobles, was succeeded by that of the lamblike Hezekiah.*

The sensual reveller simply disregards God's constitution and government of society ; but the shrewd man of the world and the intellectual sceptic sneeringly deny its reality. 'Wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight,' do they not see clearly that selfishness is at bottom the one real motive-power of society ? Priests or prophets may preach about good and evil, light and darkness, right and wrong, as though these words represented realities essentially contrary ; but do not they know that these are but words, useful instruments by which wise men govern fools, but to which they are themselves no slaves ? Shall the astute and able men who have been transacting public affairs, or their own business, with such perfect success for so long past, who have carried on the whole social and political mechanism during the prosperous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, be threatened with this 'counsel and work of Jehovah ?' Strong at once in their religious formalism and their pride of worldly craft they reply, 'Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it ; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it !'—In the act and habit of thus rejecting the guidance of Jehovah, they have harnessed themselves to their sin as to a waggon, and they shall draw the load of their choice till they find whether it be the woe that the prophet declares it to be. The words in the Hebrew may imply the punishment of the sin as well as the sin itself ; and some commentators explain the passage to mean that 'they draw and bind their punishment upon themselves by the strength of their evil doings.'

Vitringa quotes the description by Thucydides, of the like confusion between virtues and vices, and their very names, as the consequence of the Greek civil wars : *Καὶ τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἀξίωσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων εἰς τὰ ἔργα ἀντήλλαξαν τῇ*

* See the description of Hezekiah's reformation in 2 Chron. xxix. 3—10. And compare St. Paul's account of another fulfilment of the prophecy, 1 Corinth. i. 25—31.

δικαιώσει· τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀλόγιστος, ἀνδρία φιλέταιρος ἐνομίσθη· μέλλησις δὲ προμηθής, δειλία εὐπρεπής· κ. τ. λ.* And he then goes on to observe that 'there are principles of truth in man's heart which are the foundations of all right, justice, and virtue—principles not only true in themselves, but 'good' and 'sweet' in their effects: that the revelation of Jehovah, his covenant with Abraham and his descendants, his laws and promises of temporal and eternal life to all who should obey them, were especially the 'light' of the Jews; and were 'good' and 'sweet,' because the source of all consolations in every struggle with evil, and the bond by which their political society was held together: that the wicked were not satisfied with practically renouncing this light with its excellent fruits, but denied them by arguments, and perversion of the proper meaning of words: and that while this was a national sin in the days of Isaiah the Jews filled up the measure of their iniquity in the time of Christ, when they rejected the Light of life as darkness, and evil, and bitter, making the light that was in them to be darkness.'

Lastly, among the men whom Isaiah denounces as the corrupters and destroyers of the society of which they are the leaders, are the unjust lawyers and judges: he mentions as characteristic of them, that they are heroes at drinking, and spice their wine to make it stronger:† by which, perhaps, we are to understand, not that their heads and senses were overcome with wine like the drunkards spoken of above; but that the effect on their hearts and consciences was such as to harden them in their criminal perversion of the law. Perhaps the passage might be illustrated by instances of the professional character of hard-drinking but strong-headed judges of other times.

The 'law' of Jehovah was given by Moses, and embodied in institutions and a code; the 'word' was that exposition of the meaning and life of these which the

* 'The received value of names imposed for signification of things, was changed into arbitrary; for inconsiderate boldness was counted true-hearted manliness; provident deliberation, a handsome fear; modesty, the cloak of cowardice; to be wise in everything, to be lazy in everything,' &c.—Hobbes's *Translation*, iii. 82.

† Compare Psalm lxxv. 8; Prov. xxiii. 30; Cant. viii. 2. The Romans called this spiced wine *Aromatites*.

prophets were from time to time declaring in the ears of the people. The nation had cast away this law, and despised this word. And when all heart and morality are thus gone from a nation, its roots below ground are rotten, and its flourishing appearance is ready to turn to dust.* There is no substance in such a people, nothing which can stand calamity of any kind. It will sweep them away as the fire licks up the stubble which men burn when the crop of corn or hay has been gathered in.

Already, when the prophet speaks, Jehovah has smitten them in his anger. Whether the earthquake which happened in the reign of Uzziah† had actually filled the streets of Jerusalem with dead bodies, or whether Isaiah only makes it the image or instance of wider-spread national calamities, we cannot pronounce historically; but in either case, the past and present is but a foretaste of heavier woes impending: Jehovah has made the hills of their national prosperity to tremble, and personal suffering has begun: but ‘for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.’ He is about to bring foreign armies as the instruments of his judgment: the vision of the worst of human calamities—the invasion of a rich, civilized, luxurious nation by overwhelming hordes of barbarians—rises before the prophet: he speaks of them as present, and his words have a terrible force to him who reads them now, while he thinks of their fearful import then. Jehovah has set up a standard to which he is gathering the nations under the Assyrian rule, and the prophet sees them steadily though swiftly coming on in warlike array—bowmen, horses, and chariots: they rush to battle with the roar of lions, they seize and hold down their prisoners and their booty with the growl which marks the lion’s refusal to give up his prey; they come on like the sea in its rage; and when the helpless inhabitant of Judah turns from this rising tide to the land—his own

* Possibly alluding to the so-called Apples of Sodom, which the traveller still gathers on the shore of the Dead Sea. See article ‘Vine of Sodom’ in *Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*.

† Amos i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5.

land—he sees only the darkness of woe; and when he turns again from the earth to look upward he sees only the thick clouds gathering over the heavens above him. I have endeavoured, in my Version, to represent the distinction of the tenses in the original, so as to preserve the form of a picture or vision which presents itself to the prophet, and is by him put before his hearers. The indeterminate singular of the verbs and pronouns in the Hebrew is best rendered by the English ‘they’ and ‘one’ in the Authorized Version.

The men and women who heard Isaiah speak these words in the court of the temple, in the highway of the Fuller’s Field, or in some other crowded thoroughfare; who lived to see fathers and husbands, and sons and brothers, killed in the several invasions which soon followed, or mothers, wives, and daughters driven like herds of cattle to a sale and slavery worse than death; and whose wealth and sources of wealth were utterly wasted by these and like inroads into their populous and highly cultivated country; could not have thought the prophet’s language too strong for the events, though it seems so to many commentators of the last, or even the present century. Yet we must not forget that in an unimaginative and unphilosophic age, more of the idea of prophecy has been preserved by several such commentators seeking its fulfilment in several distant events, than could have been the case if they had agreed to restrict it to the mere contemporaneous history, as Grotius and others have too dryly done.* And this is such a picture of ‘the life of things,’ that it is equally the description of the same judgment of God, in whatever age or to whatever nation occurring. In successive ages it

* Nothing, indeed, can be sounder than the principle which Grotius lays down on the subject. He says:—‘In the prophecies, I have made it a main object to refer the particulars to the corresponding historical events: the reader will judge with what success. In this way certain passages which the old commentators refer to Christ and the times of the Gospel, I have referred to events nearer the prophet’s own times, yet as involving a type of those other Gospel times. I have done this because I saw it to be the only way of preserving that coherence of words and things which in the rest of the prophetic books is so admirable: and, indeed, these passages do reveal to us Christians the counsel of God, who has shadowed forth to us the Messiah, and the benefits given us through him, not by words only, but also by events.’—*Præfat. ad Annotat. ad Vet. Testamentum.*

told the Jew of the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Greek, and the Roman ; to the subject of the Roman empire it spoke no less clearly of the Goth and the Vandal ; the British monk must have recalled it in the days when Gildas recorded the invasion of the Saxon ; the degenerate Saxon learnt its truth from the Dane and the Norman ; and the Spaniard from the Mahometan ; the Byzantine from Timour ' the incarnate wrath of God ;' the Continental nations from the revolutionary armies and Napoleon ; and, in our own day, the people of France from the Germans. There is no land or nation where this terrible prophecy has not been fulfilled ; may God grant that we Englishmen may not need to be roused from our too thoughtless and selfish indifference, and to find that these words, read, but scarcely listened to in our churches, have an awful practical meaning to us !

CHAPTER V.

ISAIAH VI.—THE PROPHET'S COMMISSION.—THE TEMPLE.—ITS SCENES.—THE VISION.—INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE OF THINGS.—PROPHECY RATIONAL AND INTELLIGIBLE.—GOD THE REAL AND ACTUAL KING.—HIS HOLINESS.—HIS JUSTICE.—PATRIOTIC HOPES OF ISAIAH.

THE expression 'In the year that King Uzziah died, then I saw,' implies that Isaiah wrote this account of his vision some time after it occurred ; and both this and the like phrase in chapter xiv. 28 suggest the thought that the prophet himself revised and arranged the book of his prophecies. Whether these expressions refer to dates before or after the death of the kings mentioned in them, has been much disputed : in chapter xiv. the context will allow of either interpretation, nor in that of the passage before us can we assert that either is incongruous. Yet it seems reasonable to think with Gesenius, that if the meaning were *after*, the phrase—which is, literally, 'In the death-year of King Uzziah'—would rather have been 'In the first year of Jotham (or Hezekiah) ;' and if we suppose with him and other commentators, among whom Jarchi rests on the authority of the *Gemara*, that the chapter before us is the record of Isaiah's original calling and consecration to the prophetic office, then it must be referred to Uzziah's lifetime, as the only prophecy which can correspond with the words of the title of the whole Book—'which he saw in the days of Uzziah.'* There is certainly a great resemblance to the parallel accounts of the calling of Jeremiah and Ezekiel at the beginning of their prophecies,† but on the other hand no such formal call is recorded of the other prophets, so that it cannot be looked for as essential to their office. And therefore there is no conclusive evidence from these cases, either for or against

* Ch. i. 1.

† Jer. i. ; Ezek. i. ii.

the supposition that Isaiah may have begun to preach before this vision gave the formal ratification of his appointment to the office for which the whole style of this as of his other writings shows him to have been long educating ; nor would it be any disparagement of the authority of that ratification to consider that it recognized views of God's character and of the state and prospects of the Jewish nation which had already become familiar to the inspired seer, while it confirmed and sanctioned them in a solemn and formal decree. Yet, perhaps, the actual manner and words of the commission which Isaiah now receives, rather indicate that it was the root and source of those prophecies which stand before it in the book, and in which there is an expansion, in various forms, of its fundamental ideas, than that it was a condensed summary of truths already fully developed in his mind and in these discourses. 'Once for all,' says Ewald, 'must he who was to be a prophet, have become absolutely certain of the true relation of the world and Jehovah,—must have beheld, as in a distinct form, the sublime and holy character of Jehovah, and felt that he was directed by him alone : once for all must he have recognized the divine power of truth against the whole world, and himself as living and moving in it alone : once for all must he have entered, with the effectual energy and act of his whole inner being, into the counsels of God, and found himself for ever bound by them, and endowed by these bonds with true power and freedom :—this was the first condition, and the true beginning of all the work of the prophet, the holy consecration and the inner call, without which none became a true prophet ; and only he who had thus first turned his eyes within, and there found clearness and strength of sight, could afterwards look clearly and firmly into the world without, and there do his work as a prophet. Therefore, on the nature and strength of this beginning depended the whole subsequent life and work of a prophet : . . . where the true and vigorous beginning of the work was wanting, all subsequent endeavours were weak and defective, empty, and unfruitful ; while in the true prophets that beginning never

ceased to be operative, and the memory of it bloomed without fading in later years. If such a prophet undertook to record his more important prophecies in writing, he put at the head of them, and with a just consciousness of its significance, a description of that holy moment—often of a time long gone by—when he had first known Jehovah in his true majesty, and felt that he was called, sanctified, and endowed with strength by him.*

We shall then account, as has been already said, for the position of the earlier prophecies by considering that they give a complete picture of the state of the nation at the time that Isaiah received his commission and entered on his office, and so supply us with the preliminary information necessary to the adequate comprehension of these. For the times of Jotham were but the continuation and counterpart of those of Uzziah as to their selfishness, luxury, and worldliness, only that these were more and more rapidly preparing their own punishment by eating away the military and otherwise energetic spirit which had animated the people under Uzziah.

The scene of this Vision is the Temple; and its features will have been the same whether we suppose them to have risen before Isaiah's imagination while he was absent from the spot, in the solitude of his chamber or his house-top, or assume (as I myself prefer to do) that he was actually praying in the temple at the time.

Though it is unlikely that any of the successors to what was but a small remnant of Solomon's kingdom perfectly restored the temple after it was deprived of its original splendour by Shishak in the reign of Rehoboam, yet we see the worthier princes from time to time repairing the structure where it had been suffered to fall into decay, and replacing, as far as they could, the treasures and the costly decorations of which it was repeatedly despoiled to buy off foreign invaders; and probably there was no period in which the restoration would be more complete than in the reign of Uzziah, who in his power, wealth, and magnificence, came nearer than any other to Solomon. And there will be much more of fact than of fancy in the picture if, for

* Ewald, *Die Propheten*, i. 20.

the clearer understanding of the scene of this vision, we figure to ourselves the youthful prophet in his rough hair or woollen garment (possibly not unlike that of the Capuchin friar as we now see him in the streets or churches of Rome) going up to the temple to worship ;—and if we look with him at the temple as, at the end of 300 years from its building, it must have presented itself to his eyes, with its ample courts, and colonnades, and porch, and its holy house, and holy of holies, well-proportioned, and of the most elaborate workmanship, though rather massive than large according to our notions. As he crossed the variegated pavement of the ‘great court of the congregation,’ and stopped—for we have no reason to suppose him a Levite—at the entrance to the inner or ‘priests’ court,’ on each hand would rise one of the tall pillars which Solomon set up, in token that the kingdom was constituted by Jehovah, and would be upheld by his might,* and which, once of ‘bright brass,’ but now mellowed into bronze, had their square capitals richly wreathed with molten lilies, chain-work, and pomegranates ; before him, resting on the back of the twelve oxen, and cast like them in brass, would appear the “molten sea,” a basin of thirty cubits in circumference and containing two or three thousand *baths* of water, its brim wrought ‘like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies,’ and under these a double row of ornamental knobs ; while on each side stood five smaller lavers, the bases of which rested on wheels, and were most elaborately ornamented with oxen, lions, cherubims, and palm-trees, engraved upon them ; and beyond these again he would see the great brazen altar of burnt offering, with its never-extinguished fire ; and overhead the roof of thick cedar beams resting on rows of columns. These were the courts of the palace of the divine King of Israel,† for the reception of his subjects and his ministers. The house itself again consisted of two

* Can there be much doubt that this was the meaning of *Jachin* and *Boaz* (1 Kings vii. 21 ; 2 Chron. iii. 17) ? As they were the work of a Tyrian architect it is interesting to compare the mention of the two pillars which Herodotus saw in the temple of Hercules at Tyre.—*Herodotus*, ii. 44.

† Compare the description of Solomon’s own house, which, besides its inner porch, had another, where he sat to judge the people, 1 Kings vii. 7. The arrangement of the Temple is plainly that of a palace.

parts, the outer of which, the holy place, was accessible to those priests who were in immediate attendance on their unseen Sovereign, while the inner, or holiest place, was the very presence-chamber of the Monarch who 'dwelt between the cherubims,' which spread their golden wings over the ark containing the covenant he had vouchsafed to enter into with his people, and itself forming 'the mercy-seat,' where was 'the place of his throne and the place of the soles of his feet.' In the position which I have, following the requirements of the narrative in the chapter before us, supposed Isaiah to be placed, he would see through the open folding-doors of cypress, carved 'with cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers,' and 'covered with gold upon the carved work,' into the holy place, which he could not enter; and the light of the golden lamps on either side would show him the cedar panelling of the walls, carved with knobs and open flowers, with cherubims and palm-trees, festooned with chain-work, and richly gilt; the mosaics* of precious stones; the cypress floor; the altar of incense; the table with the shewbread; the censers, tongs, and other furniture of 'pure and perfect gold;' and before the doorway at the further end, and not concealed by the open leaves of the olive-wood doors (carved and gilded like the others), would be distinguishable the folds of the vail 'of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen,' embroidered with cherubims. In the East the closed vail, or *purdah*, declares the presence and secures the privacy of the monarch, into which no man may intrude and live; and in the temple at Jerusalem it was the symbol of the awful presence and unapproachable majesty of the King, Jehovah, Lord of hosts. The pious and thoughtful Jew, taught to connect the presence of his God with this actual dwelling-place in the midst of his own chosen nation, was thereby educated to realize the unity and the personality of God in a way that could not then have been otherwise possible. And thus he was not the less, but the better, enabled to feel and know that 'heaven and the heaven of heavens could not contain' Jehovah,

* The word 'mosaic' is said to have had its origin from the variegated pavement of the temple.

how much less then this house. That the fact was so, we see from the whole tenor of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, when, in the midst of the pomp and splendour of the assembled nation, the king, raised on a brazen scaffold near the altar, 'kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands to heaven,' and in the name of his people renewed the national covenant with Jehovah, the God of Israel. Other recognitions of that covenant occur to the mind as it transports itself into the past: we may picture to ourselves the triumphal return of the Jewish army from the field of Berachah, when 'they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy;' 'and they came to Jerusalem with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, into the house of Jehovah,' to celebrate with praise and thanksgiving their victory over the far stronger forces of a general gathering of the Moabites, Ammonites, and other shepherd nations, whose invasions have been in all ages so terrible to a civilized country—a victory which even the neighbouring kings recognized as the work of Jehovah, whose covenant with Israel both king and people had so earnestly pleaded before the battle: or we may see before us another time when the temple courts were again filled with armed men, not the splendid retinue of a peaceful monarch, nor the troops of one just returned from the war, but veteran soldiers, loyal nobles, and patriotic Levites, secretly assembled from distant parts of the country, and resolved at all hazards to restore the constitution subverted by the usurping murderess Athaliah, and to maintain the rights of the little child of seven years old who 'stood in the midst of them at his pillar, as the manner was,' while 'they put upon him the crown and gave him the testimony, and made him king, and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king,' and then renewed for themselves, the people, and the king, the covenant which had thus once more been upheld in the person of the only remaining, only unmurdered, son of the line of David. And then, recalled by our text to 'the year in which king Uzziah died,' we think of the scene which these same

courts had witnessed shortly before, not of the ratification, but of the breach of the national covenant, when Uzziah, the man of his age, the representative of the worldly spirit, the religious formalism, and the material energy and prosperity of the nation, had ('because he was strong, and his heart was lifted up to his destruction') intruded himself into the sanctuary to burn incense, and the bold remonstrance and resistance of the priests had been supported and enforced by his being suddenly 'smitten of Jehovah' with leprosy. Though this act of Uzziah is only mentioned in the Chronicles, there is nothing improbable in the narrative. It is said that leprosy is a disease often brought out by sudden excitement, and the intrusion of Uzziah and the resistance of the priests are easily conceived and understood. The burning incense was one of the ecclesiastical functions restricted to the high priest by the law,* and the separation, and in some respects co-ordination of the offices of the king and the high priest—of the State and the Church—were a standing witness for the majesty of the present though invisible Jehovah, greater than both, and actually directing both according to one constitution and law. This independence of the priesthood would have presented anomalies and inconveniences in the working of the state machine which we can believe Uzziah may have thought it well to be rid of by asserting his supremacy; while not only the priests, but those who, priests or not, entered into the spirit of the constitution, might deprecate the remedy as worse than the evil to be cured. A great part of the history of Christendom has been the history of the like conflict of rights on a wider and more complicated scale, from the days when the first Christians refused to acknowledge the divinity of the Roman emperors, to our own times, and our experiments, still making, whether for the separation, or the more harmonious relations, of Church and State.

Perhaps on this occasion, as certainly on many others, Isaiah had been joining in the public daily sacrifice and worship, and had afterwards brought his own free-willing offering—a bullock or a lamb without blemish. Such an

* Exod. xxx. 7, 8; Numb. xvi. 40, xviii. 7.

offering, the symbol of his dedication of himself to Jehovah's service, would be the natural expression of his earnest desire for some token that it was at last permitted him to enter on the actual functions of that prophetic office for which he had been so long preparing; and that this vision was the answer to such heartfelt prayerful desire—itself an inspiration from on high—we may well believe.

The notion that it is a poetic fiction by which Isaiah represents, as in an allegory, the commencement of his career as a prophet, is plainly a mere expedient of writers who cannot conceive or believe in any fact which transcends their individual experience. Thus the critics of the last century supposed the gods and goddesses in Homer to be an ingenious 'machinery for the conduct of the piece,' exactly like that of the sylphs and gnomes in the 'Rape of the Lock,' and with no more reality to the poet's own mind; and the rational philosophers and serious Christians fancied themselves required to quibble away the admonitions of Socrates to his disciples, to adhere to the actual worship of Apollo, or Eros, or Esculapius, before either the wisdom or the virtue of the sage could be safely or consistently approved: but in the present day, we are beginning again to understand the force of St. Paul's words when he told the Athenians that their poets and philosophers had in their own way been trying to feel after and to find a divine Lord, of whose presence they were daily conscious and whose offspring they believed themselves to be. Isaiah might probably have said, as St. Paul did on a like occasion, 'Whether I was in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell,' but he would undoubtedly have confirmed the plain meaning of his words that the vision was a reality and a fact; nor does he in using these words adopt a language essentially different from that which has been employed by wise and good men—neither fanatics nor impostors—in all countries and ages down to this we live in, to describe like inward experiences. Thus Wordsworth, who, like every other great teacher, is at once the expounder of truths for all times, and the thorough man of his own, after describing his other endowments as a poet, speaks of—

‘ Another gift,
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood
In which the burden and the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood.
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.’

Let us thoughtfully bring before ourselves the youthful Hebrew seer, with his vigorous and cultivated imagination, his piety and faith towards God, and his longing to enter on the service of his country in that ministry to which he had dedicated himself: let us consider the long mental discipline, the conflicts of soul, the hope and despair, the watching, the fasting, and the prayer, which alone could have formed such a man as the prophet Isaiah actually comes before us in each page of his writings: let us think of the ‘burden and the mystery’ which must have oppressed his spirit when he looked on the wealth and prosperity around him, and thought how glorious his country might be, yet how plainly it was going forward to the ruin which his study of past history, and of the warnings by Moses and his successors the prophets, told him was now ready to fall on this corrupt and sense-bound generation: let us enter into his heart’s desire to save them, if it were yet possible, by recalling them to the knowledge of their invisible LORD and King whose holy covenant and service they had forsaken; and then into the sickness and despair which would replace that hope when he thought of the men whom he had just seen assisting at the sacrifices with ‘hands full of blood,’ ‘the show of their countenances witnessing against them,’ while the very stones of the pavement seemed ready to cry out in God’s name ‘Tread my courts no more:’ let us remember how he felt and knew that he too was bound by the same evil nature and circumstances as these his countrymen; how he must have been overwhelmed with the sense of what a work he was proposing to engage in, and how utterly beyond his or any

human strength it was; and how sustained, while overwhelmed, by the still deeper sense that there was a Power sufficient even for these things:—and then we shall find in the above-quoted calm and rational description of the experience of an Englishman of the nineteenth century an explanation and illustration of the greater part at least of what not only may but must have been the mental and bodily state of the Hebrew prophet, when he ‘saw the Lord sitting on a throne.’ The partly psychical partly physical phenomena involved in this class of questions, may have to wait another generation before their turn arrives for that scientific investigation and solution which in every department of fact and thought is superseding the inaccurate theoretical scepticism of the last century: we need an exact analysis of that intensified and exalted condition of the human mind which has given us language in one age, mythology in another, prophecy in another, and which still yields philosophy and poetry at least to us moderns; and of that life of the body which must be the seat of hearing, sight, and our other senses; which seems to assert an independent existence for itself and for the soul in dreams;* and which may be able in other modes to act without the help of those material organs which remain to the corpse on the dissecting-table but give it no sensations. Yet if we must be content with the faith that our children will have a light not given to us in these things, we shall I think find that here as in so much else, we may—if we will only clearly state to our own minds the question which we know we cannot completely answer—get a kind and degree of knowledge well worth

* ‘Reasoning operations may be conducted in sleep. Mathematicians have, in their slumbers, solved problems which posed them when awake. The great mathematician, Condillac, was sometimes enabled in his sleep to bring to a satisfactory conclusion speculations which, in the day, were incomplete. Cabanis tells us that Franklin so often formed correct and highly important conceptions of persons and political events in his sleep, as to have been inclined to view his dreams with superstitious reverence, while the real fact was, says Cabanis, that the philosopher’s acute and sagacious intellect was operating even in his sleep. . . . Cases are on record of judges who, in their sleep, have delivered decisions of the weightiest kind; and of poets who, in that state, have composed verses of great power and beauty, though they were by no means exempt from a certain degree of mystical indistinctness.’—*Sleep and Dreams*, in *Miscellanies*, by J. A. Symonds, M.D., pp. 54, 62, where the reader will find much more, illustrative of the point we are considering.

having. For we shall perceive that we are under no necessity to resort to rabbinical or quasi-rabbinical figments in support of the reality of Isaiah's vision, nor to neological devices for getting rid of it: we shall be at least in a position to see that there is nothing monstrous in the fact, nor irrational in the belief, of a vision such as the prophet here describes; and that we have not here one of those prodigies which superstition delights in, and true no less than false philosophy recoils from, but an event solemn and wonderful indeed, yet having a more matter of fact reality and a higher interest to him who seeks to have a reason for his faith than to any other man.

But while we thus recognize the prophet's mental state to have been a calm, rational, orderly, human state, we must remember that our Christian faith—nay our reason when illumined by faith—forbids us to conceive of this vision as a mere projection of that mental state, and of the seer as beholding only what his own imagination had first created. Everything shows how thoroughly Isaiah was prepared to become the recipient of a communication from on high, but we are not therefore to be content to think that after all there was no actual communication; but only the supposition of it which would do as well. Let us get a real personal knowledge of the messenger (and we must get this not from commentators and critics but from hearty study of his own words), and then we shall be better able to understand the message—the revelation—which God has employed that man to take to his brethren: for though God can and does speak through instruments unconscious of his designs,—a Cæsar or a Napoleon, a whirlwind or an earthquake,—yet when he would lead us into the knowledge of himself, and of his wisdom and love towards us, he speaks only through men whom he has first qualified themselves to understand and appreciate the good tidings they bear. But our reason will indeed have become folly if we deduce from the complete qualifications of the messenger that he has no message; from the perfect adaptation of the means to the end, that there is no end. If we will be rational, no less than if we will be Christian, we must steadily recognize the reality—the objective,

independent reality—of that communication which Isaiah was thus qualified to become the recipient of. *How* this could be, *how* God reveals his mind and will to men, *how* the poetic or other human faculty gives form and expression to truths not imagined nor discovered, but communicated from on high,—this can never be *explained*: an explanation is a contradiction in terms, an assertion that the Infinite is definable, that the Superhuman is subject to the laws, and expressible in terms, of the human. Let the understanding attempt to comprehend the Divine, and that which it has in its grasp inevitably proves not to be the thing inquired for. We must, and well may, be content to know that God has revealed himself to man, and thankful that man is capable of receiving and benefiting by, though not of defining, that revelation.

The throng of formal worshippers would have left the temple; the voices of the choirs of singers ‘clothed in white linen,’ and chanting in alternate parts,

‘O give thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good;
For his mercy endureth for ever,’

or some other appointed psalm, would have died into silence; and if other devout Israelites were praying apart while the white-robed priest was silently presenting their prayers in the fragrant cloud of incense which rose from the golden altar in the holy place, the stillness and solemnity of the scene would be thereby heightened rather than disturbed. Then the vail of the temple was withdrawn, and the holy of holies discovered to the prophet’s eyes; and he saw the Lord sitting as a king upon his throne, actually governing and judging. His train, the symbol of dignity and glory, filled the holy place; while around him hovered the attendant seraphim, spirits of purity, zeal, and love, chanting in alternate choirs the holiness of Jehovah: the threshold vibrated with the sound, and the ‘white cloud’ of the divine presence, as if descending to mingle itself with the ascending incense of prayer, filled the house. The eternal archetypes of the Hebrew’s symbolic worship were revealed to Isaiah; and as the centre of them all his eyes saw the King, the LORD of Hosts, of whom the actual

rulers from David to Uzziah had been but the temporary and subordinate viceroys. In that presence which consumes all impurities while none can mix with it, even the spirits of fire cover their faces and their feet, conscious that they are not pure in God's sight, but justly chargeable with imperfection : and much more does Isaiah shrink from the aspiring thoughts he had hitherto entertained of his fitness to be the preacher of that God to his countrymen,—he a man of unclean lips, sharing the uncleanness of the people among whom he dwells. In deepest self-abasement he realizes the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the utter separation it makes between man and the holy God. Everywhere else the attendants of the invisible King of Israel are cherubims—those symbolical ‘living creatures’ of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse, which are best illustrated as to the forms in which they were sculptured, embroidered, or conceived, by comparison with the human-headed and winged bulls and lions of Egypt and Assyria. The word seraphim (burning ones) in the sense of attendant angels, occurs only here ; but it may not the less have been known in this sense to Isaiah and his contemporaries, and have been here preferred as indicating the holiness of him to whom they ministered.

Whether we take this chapter to be the first in actual date or no, it is the key to the whole Book ; and the announcement which it makes of the holiness of Jehovah is the key to the chapter. This vision in the temple was to Isaiah what that of the burning bush was to Moses. That God had made a covenant with the nation, a true ‘original social contract’ between king and people, and of the people among themselves ; that each member of the nation was personally responsible for the breach of that covenant ; that the holiness and righteousness of God made it certain that he would enforce it, at whatever cost to the guilty parties ; yet that the same righteousness caused him to hold the contract binding on himself as well as them ; and that therefore he had provided a way of reconciliation between them and himself through the sacrifice of that which separates them ;—this was what was revealed to Moses, and became the ground-work of the whole Hebrew

polity. And now that a long course of worldly growth and progress had almost obliterated this, the old fundamental faith of the nation, the same revelation is renewed to Isaiah when he is to be sent forth as the restorer of what Moses originally established. Every nation arrives from time to time at some crisis, when it must either lose all that it has hitherto gained, and so fall from its place among the nations, or else must shake off the evil and with renewed strength go forward in its appointed course. And such a crisis had the Jewish nation come to in the time of Isaiah. He was to be God's main though not only instrument for carrying her through the struggle; he is therefore first made to know his own utter insufficiency, and then to realise the sufficiency which comes from God alone. He was a Jew, a member of the holy, separated, covenanted nation, accustomed to seek purification from the stains of conduct in the rites of the law, and able to understand how those rites were morally efficacious when God accepted the sacrifice of the selfish will by the man of contrite heart. But now the exceeding sinfulness of sin itself, of his nature not of his acts, was discovered to him; and he needed the fire from the altar to be applied to his own lips, and not to the bullock or the goat he might have brought for sacrifice, and by God's own ministry and not by the earthly priest: and this was done, as a sacramental and efficacious pledge that he had now received that inmost purification which John, the last of the prophets, calls 'the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire.' * 'Fire,' says Vitringa, 'is something pure, burning, purifying; it lays hold of, penetrates, and, as it were, converts into its own substance whatever is susceptible of its action, thus hallowing the gifts laid on the altar. All these are the attributes of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to purge and illuminate man, to excite him to the love of God, to affect him with zeal for his glory, to arouse him from sloth to fervour, to inflame him with courage and constancy, with energy and devotion of all his powers to the cause of God, and to enable him to make supplications to God according to his will. And in this place fire sig-

* Compare St. Paul's conversion, Acts ix.

nifies the spirit of prophecy, which spirit, like fire, sanctifies men in a peculiar manner to this great work, kindles, inflames, makes them glow with zeal; and, what is true in itself and specially applicable here, converts them into seraphs.' Jehovah desired a willing messenger; therefore he does not command Isaiah to take on him the office, but gives him opportunity to do so if he be willing. And the prophet, now filled with the spirit of Jehovah, and feeling that by that spirit he is made holy, immediately proposes himself as ready to accept the commission.

It has been, and is still discussed, whether, in the words 'Who will go for us?' as in the like use of the plural pronoun in other places in the Old Testament, there is a reference to the Trinity; or whether the phrase is 'merely the plural of majesty,' or some other idiom. There is something opposed to all our present habits of thought and criticism in the notion that a word of this kind can be made to prove a dogma; yet to the mind which recognises a deeper meaning in words than the merely grammatical, the latter explanation will seem a very poor substitute for the old dogmatic interpretation. It would be better to ask what is the origin of the 'plural of majesty.' Majesty, or *greaterness*, is the attribute of the personal head of a body, not that of a solitary individual. *I* is the word of mere will, good or evil; *we*, that of counsel, fellowship, and co-operation; and the plural of the latter expresses a higher unity than the singular of the former. There is a higher unity in the marriage of man and wife than in the single half-existence of either separately, and in the Godhead which is the object of the Christian's faith than in the solitary Being whom the Mahometan or other Theist worships. 'The first cause,' says Aristotle, 'is the last in discovery:' when it is at last revealed, we can look back and trace its workings in forms where it could not have been recognized at the time, and thus we, by the fulness of the light of the Gospel, can see in the language which combines the plural Elohim with the singular Jehovah, the preludings of that revelation of the Trinity in Unity which the spirit of man was not yet educated to receive in its spiritual meaning,

and the formal announcement of which could therefore have only confirmed and perpetuated his natural proneness to polytheism.

The prophet is 'sent,' has a commission. This, as I have already pointed out,* is implied in the Hebrew word which we translate 'prophet.' The Jew understood him to be 'one who spoke not his own words, but those of another;' one who was sent from God as his ambassador and interpreter. And this is the commission:—'Go, say to this people,'—not, as usual, to 'my people;' but as to a people cast off by their Lord,—that warning shall only harden them in their evil courses until they have been punished to the uttermost. 'To hear and not to understand' is used by Demosthenes as a proverb. To make the heart 'fat,' that is 'dull,' corresponds with the like usage of the words *παχύς* and *pinguis*. The meaning of these threatenings, with their stern irony, must be limited and explained by the consideration that they are national, directed against a nation and its members as such, and that they neither imply, nor sanction, any—so-called Calvinistic—doctrine of spiritual perdition. If they had been willing to walk in the ways of righteousness they would have received ever-increasing light and power to do so, and their national prosperity would have been in proportion. But they shall not retain that prosperity for mere selfish ends. They might be willing in the hour of adversity to 'convert and be healed' in some sense which would enable them to return to the enjoyment of their former prosperity, but in hardening their minds and hearts against the moral and spiritual teachings of the prophet they will have so deadened their higher faculties that they shall not be able to find and take that course which is indeed for their own interest, but which only the disinterested righteous can attain to. And so the warnings of the prophet may be said to be the cause of their reprobate condition.† Still the ultimate object is not destruction but reformation, so that it be inward and not merely outward. To secure its inward

* Page 10.

† These doctrines, that blindness is the punishment of depravity, that a repentance is futile which aims at retaining the gain for which the offence

reality, even when the nation is reduced to a tenth this small remnant shall again be tried by the fire; but the end shall be that all that is really holy and worthy in the life of the nation shall spring again from the old roots of the tree which has been cut down to the ground. The final assertion of Jehovah's righteousness shall be love, not power.

We, reading this prophecy in the light of history, can say that if it were anywhere necessary thus to assert God's righteousness against sin, most especially was it so in this chosen nation of Israel. Israel had been set apart, that in him all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and if he became reprobate, where were this promise to the world?—'If gold rusteth, what should iron do?' Therefore the cities were to be wasted without inhabitant, and the land utterly desolate; and even after a partial recovery from this punishment, and a humble restoration of a small part of their ancient glory, the stern process should be repeated again and again: the invasion of Pekah and Rezin would be repaired only to be followed by that of Sennacherib; the captivity of Manasseh would succeed

was committed, and that no repentance is possible to him who is the slave of his sins, may be illustrated from Shakspeare;—the first from *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 11,

'But when we in our viciousness grow hard,
O misery on't! the wise gods seal our eyes;
In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us
Adore our errors; laugh at us while we strut
To our confusion.'

The others from *Hamlet*, iii. 3,

'But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!—
That cannot be; since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded hands may shove by justice;
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law: But 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd,
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can: What can it not?
Yet what can it, when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom, black as death!
O limed soul: that struggling to be free,
Art more engaged!'

the peaceful reign of Hezekiah ; Josiah would restore the kingdom only to be laid waste by the Egyptian and the Assyrian ; the Roman would come after the Greek, and even Hadrian after Titus. All thought of an earthly glory of the nation must give way before such a prospect. If the prophet could have looked so far forward, and with a patriot's hopes alone, there was nothing but humiliation and despair before him ; he could at most expect but such temporary alleviation and restoration as might enable him to do his work while he was there. No doubt—we shall come upon the proofs immediately—the prophet did not in the earlier years of his ministry take this view of the meaning of the promise with which the divine commission concludes ; but still trusted that the holy seed, the substance of the nation, would spring up again, even in his own day, and Israel be restored to more than its pristine prosperity and power among the nations, as well as to its first and pure faith in Jehovah. And when the terrible truth did at last become clear to him, he had been prepared to understand, and to declare to his own people, and to mankind, what more than adequate compensation was still left behind.

I have followed what seems the more probable meaning of verse 13, yet venture to observe that the Authorized Version makes a satisfactory sense, if we understand an allusion (by one of those poetical transitions which characterize Isaiah's strong imagination) to the tithes, the sacred portion of the produce of the land, and to their being duly gathered in and eaten by those to whom they pertained, and not to any wasteful consumption of them. Whether the concluding image of the teil (or terebinth) and the oak trees, is that of their casting their leaves, or of their being cut down, like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, is uncertain. In either case the idea of the life subsisting under the apparent death is the same.

CHAPTER VI.

ISAIAH VII.—THE ACCESSION OF AHAZ.—POLITICAL STATE OF KING AND PEOPLE.—‘JEHOVAH SAID.’—TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM.—THE VIRGIN CONCEIVING.—THE INCARNATION AN UNIVERSAL IDEA—HOW REALIZED.—LOSS OF HEBREW INDEPENDENCE.—ISAIAH NOT A MAGICIAN.

THE next, and following prophecies, to the end of chapter xvi., belong, with more or less clearness, to the reign of Ahaz. The ‘And’ with which the narrative opens here, and in chapter viii., has already been noticed among the indications that the book has been arranged as a continuous whole ; the narrative itself connects a succession of discourses spread over at least a year (chap. viii. 2, 3) ; while the phrases of verse 1—‘it came to pass in the days of Ahaz,’ and ‘he was not able to take it’—mark that it was written after the events had become history, and probably after the death of Ahaz.

The reign of Jotham was characterized (as I have already observed) by the same material prosperity and order, internal and external, political and religious, as that of his father Uzziah : the difference (not easily perceptible at the time) will have been that a new generation was grown up, enervated by peace and luxury, and trusting as a matter of course to old traditional routine, when they were on the eve of events to which it would be as inapplicable as that of the Austrians and Prussians in the generation after that of Frederic the Great was to meet the young enthusiasm of the French under Napoleon.

The three narratives of these events—that before us, and those in the books of Kings and Chronicles—are very brief ; and while each gives some facts not mentioned in the other, they all leave us without sufficient information to enable us to arrange the whole in chronological order.

But thus much we can say :—In the last years of Jotham's reign, Pekah king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, made an alliance against Judah ; and the accession of the weak youth Ahaz gave them a favourable opportunity for their purpose. A great battle annihilated the old army of Uzziah (as that of Jena did the army of Frederic); the invaders plundered and wasted the whole country, and carried off a great number of men, women, and children, of whom the share of the Syrians was sold into slavery at Damascus, while that of the Ephraimites was sent back by the intervention of the prophet Obed, who recognized, and induced his countrymen to recognize, a bond and claim of brotherhood in the common blood and faith which their national enmities had lost sight of. But the best commentators differ—for the remaining records are insufficient to inform us—whether the battle occurred before or after the advance which Ahaz was now expecting against his capital. On the one hand it may be argued, that up to the destruction of his army Ahaz, and his princes and people, would have retained the insolent self-confidence denounced by Isaiah in the previous chapters ; and that it was when their scoffing demand, that ‘Jehovah would hasten his work that they might see it,’ had been granted ; and when they heard that the allies were preparing for a second invasion, of which the object was not merely the reaping another year's harvest of plunder, but also the taking of Jerusalem, the deposition of the house of David, and the permanent subjection of the kingdom to the son of Tabeal, apparently intended to be a viceroy or tributary king, like those whom the Assyrian kings, in their lately deciphered annals, habitually speak of setting up ;*—that then the people and their rulers were panic-struck ; ‘and their hearts were moved, as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind.’ We should then understand by ‘Syria resteth upon Ephraim,’ either ‘has renewed the

* Dr. Schrader (*Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, pp. 118, 120, 145, 147), finds the names of Tabeal of Aram (Ti-bi'-i-lu mat A-ru-mu), Rezin of Damascus (Ra-sun-nu Dimaskai), Pekah of Beth-Omri or Samaria (mat Bit-Hu-um-ri Pa-ka-ha), and Ahaz of Judah (Ja-hu-ha-zi Ja-hu-da-ai), in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser ; but not in any farther connection with the events of this chapter than that they mention Pekah's death, and that the others were tributaries to Assyria.

old alliance,' which, considering the disorganized and half-barbarized state of these petty governments, was likely enough to have been only made for single campaigns; or else 'has encamped on the territory of Ephraim,' in preparation for a fresh march into Judæa: and the scornful phrase, 'the two tails of these smoking firebrands,' would imply that they had already been wasting the country, and that the prophet foresaw that their power was just extinct. On the other hand it is urged that the language of the narrative before us—of the enemy 'taking counsel to go up,' and Ahaz preparing against a siege—implies that this march of the allies against Jerusalem was the beginning of their invasion, and of the calamities that marked the reign of Ahaz, and that we cannot otherwise account for the slighting manner in which Isaiah speaks of the designs and power of the enemy, and for the absence of any allusion on his part to those great calamities if they had already occurred.

We can, however, form a distinct image of the position of Jerusalem and its people at the time at which this prophecy was delivered; and we see its correspondence with that described in chapter i.

There is pathos, as well as force and propriety, in the phrase 'the house of David' in this place. David had succeeded in uniting the ancient parties of Israel and Judah into one strong monarchy:* when it was told him that the kings of the earth were gathering themselves together against him, he felt no fear, but went forth at the head of his armies, and in the name of Jehovah destroyed them; and among other nations whom he thus reduced, were the Syrians of Damascus, whose capital he garrisoned, and made themselves tributary. And now, the house of David had not only long lost the tribes of Israel, but was trembling for its own existence, threatened by those tribes 'with a rage that reached up to heaven,' and were now returning in confederacy with this very Syria. And the faith no less than the might of David had departed from him who sat in David's throne: Ahaz had no trust in Jehovah the Lord of the nation, and therefore his heart

* 2 Sam. vii. 1—5.

was moved, and he called on Assyria and Assyria's gods to help him.

'Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah'—not by some miraculous communication, alien from all human experience, and of which neither the reality nor the worth is proved by saying that Isaiah's writings are a part of the Bible; but by that inward and spiritual command which is daily and hourly telling each of us what is our work, and how we are to do it. Luther, in his Commentary on Genesis, in the midst of statements which show that he had no doubts of the occurrence of miracles either in his own or any other age, makes singular efforts to give a non-miraculous character to the expression 'Jehovah said;' explaining that it was Adam who spoke to Eve, Shem to Abraham, and so on. The great preacher of the Word felt and knew that the mightiest, divinest, presence and power of God's spirit manifested itself through properly human discourse, and not by some voice in the air. When it is taught and received for orthodox that God only revealed himself to men in former times by certain occasional and external miracles, and that our knowledge of him is limited to what has been written down of such communications, we have reason to fear that we have too little sense that God is always actively present with us now, and to suspect that our belief is mechanical, and sceptical and superstitious at once. A Luther, or even a Cromwell, would have shrunk from dishonouring the spirit of God within him, by supposing that it was not by the same wisdom and the same power as inspired Isaiah that he spoke and acted, in the Diet of Worms, or on the field of Dunbar.

Ancient topography is often obscure, even when learned men get to the spot with their books in their hands, because the surface of the sites has been perpetually changing, both by the natural waste or accumulation of the soil, and by the successive demolition and construction of buildings, age after age; and the most recent explorations have not yet finally decided some of the most important points in the topography of Jerusalem. But they all—as far as I can judge—tend to the conclusion that what I may call

the provisional topography of Mr. Fergusson* gives the most correct, as it certainly does the most coherent means for forming a notion of what must have taken place on the various occasions in which we require a picture—if it must be partly a fancy one—of the Jerusalem of the day. And I therefore here assume the highway of the ‘Fuller’s Field’ to have been outside the northern gate which opened into the road to Samaria.† We see from chapter x. 28—32 that an army marching on Jerusalem might be expected upon the north side of the city, where the ground within and without the walls was nearly on the same level, while on the west, south, and east deep and precipitous ravines formed strong natural intrenchments. And as far as history has recorded, the main attack in successive sieges was—no doubt for this reason—from the north. The principal attacks of Antiochus Sidetes and of Pompey were on the north; and Titus took up a position in this quarter; while its traditional name of the Assyrian camp recorded the former presence of the army of Rabshakeh, or possibly of Nebuchadnezzar.

Isaiah, like the other prophets, taught not only by verbal discourse, but also by symbolical acts, which, especially in those times, gave a life and force to the former which it would not have had by itself. Accordingly he now takes with him his son Shear-jashub (‘a remnant shall return,’ or ‘be converted’), who was not improbably born during the grief and terror of the earlier invasion (in which Isaiah may himself have lost other children or relations), and was thus named as a sign to the people‡ of the warnings and promises which he had already begun to deliver. He finds Ahaz, no doubt accompanied, in oriental fashion, by a throng of people, just outside the wall of the city, examining the state of the fortifications, and of the reservoirs which, fed by the brook Gihon, were situated in that

* *Topography of Ancient Jerusalem*; and article *Jerusalem*, in *Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*.

† Captain Wilson thinks the aqueduct discovered in this quarter by Mr. Shick in 1871 may be ‘the conduit of the highway of the fuller’s field.’ *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, April, 1872. Josephus says ‘the fuller’s monument’ was on the north side of the city. See farther below, on chapter xxii.

‡ Compare chap. viii. 18.

quarter, and which it was now necessary to provide for the defence of, that they might neither be available to the expected besiegers nor cut off by them from supplying the city. The fullers had their works there for the convenience of the water, and the causeway which led to their fulling ground was a convenient place for the purposes of both Ahaz and Isaiah, just as it suited Rab-shakeh* when it was his object both to reconnoitre the ground for a siege, and also to harangue the people on the walls.

Hitherto we have known the prophet as a writer, and through his writings ; now he comes before us as a speaker. The present and following chapters (vii. i. ; ix. 7) are much more like short reports of actual speeches than the first five chapters ; and the narrative and oration together give us a lively picture of how Isaiah did speak, or preach, there in Jerusalem.

Isaiah tells Ahaz not to fear any further mischief from these two firebrands, now all but burnt out : each prides himself in his nation and city, and in himself as the head of these ; each may have some right to that position, though in the term 'Remaliah's son,' the prophet seems to allude to the fact that Pekah was the son of a usurper, and not of the royal blood ; but neither they nor their instrument—perhaps also described in scorn as the son of Tabeal instead of by his own name—shall ever be the head of Judah. Jehovah laughs them to scorn, and decrees that their policy shall not stand nor come to pass, but that they themselves shall be broken instead, and be no more nations. Yet to this prediction of the overthrow of the invaders of Judah, he adds that Judah too shall likewise perish if it repents not : 'If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.' If they would believe, if they would trust in Jehovah, their King and their God, as their fathers had trusted before them, they would need no other help against their enemies. This we may be sure from the whole character of Isaiah's teaching was his first meaning now. But he would have foreseen that the Assyrians might be speedily expected again in Syria and in Ephraim, both which countries they had already

* Chap. xxxvi. 2.

reduced more than once to subjection.* Pekah had deposed the son of Assyria's vassal, Menahem, and it has been inferred with some probability that their plan for conquering Judah may have been part of a scheme for alliance with Egypt against Assyria. We see that the parties in the anarchy into which the kingdom of Ephraim was now falling applied alternately to Assyria and to Egypt,† and that the international relations of these kingdoms was now such as to make a conflict probable between them seems indicated in verse 18 of this chapter. Various attempts have been made to clear up the obscure parallelism of verses 8 and 9, and the still greater obscurity of the date 'sixty-five,' which latter cannot be proved either to agree or to disagree with history, as we can neither fix the exact year of this prediction, nor of any event to which it might refer. Some have cut the knot by pronouncing the last half of verse 8 to be a gloss introduced into the text. But if it be genuine, the number 'sixty-five' seems best explained as a definite for an indefinite number, and as meaning 'within the time of men now living.' This may seem too remote a deliverance to have afforded much consolation to those whom the prophet was now addressing; but he immediately brings the term within nearer and more precise limits.

Ahaz heard in sullen and incredulous silence; and the prophet resumes,—‘Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God: ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.’—But Ahaz, who looked on Jehovah not as his God, but only (like any of his heathen neighbours) as the god of Judæa, and as such inferior to the god of Assyria; and who had determined to apply to the king of Assyria, or perhaps had already applied to him, as a more trustworthy helper than Jehovah, in the present strait; declines to ask a sign, excusing himself by a canting use of the words of Moses, ‘Thou shalt not tempt Jehovah.’ He refused the sign, because he knew it would confirm the still struggling voice of his conscience; and that voice he had resolved not to

* Jehu, Benhadad, Menahem, and Hazael, are all named in the Inscriptions, and Menahem in 2 Kings xv. 19, as paying tribute to Assyria.

† Hosea ix. 3, xi. 5, xii. 1.

obey, since it bid him give up the Assyrian, and trust in Jehovah henceforth.

Many of the best authorities, ancient and modern, translate the words quoted above—‘Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God, going down to hell, or going up to heaven.’ But it may be doubted whether Isaiah, even in a moment of prophetic enthusiasm, would have proposed such a choice to Ahaz. We may rather infer from the signs which he himself offered on this and on other occasions,* the like intention now. If Isaiah had offered to perform a miracle, the narrative before us would hardly have been given in its present shape, in which the promise of ‘the maiden with child’ is treated as a far higher sign than any which could be exhibited in the depths of earth or height of heaven. A comparison with *Exod. iii. 12*, and *Isaiah xxxvii. 30*, throws some light upon the use of the word ‘sign’ in the present instance, and upon the mental state of the speaker and hearers which could recognize a propriety in a sign of which the force was only to be seen after the event. There may seem little difficulty in the whole passage to those who are content to ‘take for granted’ that it has some good meaning, and to express this feeling in the accustomed formula that ‘the words are a prophecy of Christ;’ but he who tries to discover what the meaning really is—what ‘a prophecy of Christ’ means—will find need for further examination. To believe in a person, is to trust him because we know and love him; but to believe a narrative, an argument, or a prophecy, about him, is to understand it. And to understand the passage before us, we must understand what manner of man the speaker was; what he was actually saying, and meaning; what import his words had to those who heard him; what import they have to us. We must, if possible, bridge over the gulf of apparently unknown depth and width which separates us from Isaiah, as he stood that day ‘at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller’s field.’

On the refusal of Ahaz to ask a sign of Jehovah’s faith-

* *Vv. 14, 15, 16; viii. 3, 4, 18; xx. 3; xxxvii. 30; xxxviii. 7.*

fulness to his people, Isaiah breaks into an apostrophe—the utterance at once of an orator and a poet—in which the speaker is carried forward by the power of a mental impulse which for the time controls him, rather than he it. No one who has listened to a great orator, or even read the words of an impassioned writer like Burke or Carlyle, can be wholly unaware that the one and the other is, for the time, possessed and mastered by such a power ;—a power which men in all times and nations have continually recognized as spiritual and divine, and which we have been too much deterred from so acknowledging, because we see it employed for bad as well as for good ends, and forget that nowhere in the world of nature is this mysterious mixture of good and evil absent. And this elevated, ecstatic frame of the orator, as of the poet, is still more marked among southern and eastern nations. I have been told that Mazzini's denunciations of the oppressor, and predictions of his country's future social and political regeneration, were at times uttered by him with an inconceivable fervour, rising into the tone of song rather than of mere eloquence. The reader's own observation and experience will supply him with other illustrations, sufficient to enable him to realize this characteristic of the prophet—that he was an orator, whose oratory was of the noblest kind for manner no less than matter, and that consequently as often as his love of his country and his zeal for his God raised him to the height of some great argument, his words necessarily became, as in the present instance, the expression of thoughts and feelings which passed beyond the limits which, in a cooler moment, perhaps only the moment before or after, his senses and logical faculty would have imposed upon them. The thoughts and feelings were really his, and such as the whole culture of his life, intellectual, moral, religious, had made it possible for them to be, yet such as only an occasion like the present could have called into expression. Isaiah had gone down to the Fuller's Field intending in his own mind to address the king in the words which we have in verses 4—9, and to support this address by such symbolic emphasis as an oriental people would feel at the sight of the child Shear-

jashub. And it may already have occurred to him—or, if not, he took it as the fitting course immediately afterwards—to resolve, and publicly announce his resolution, to call his next child by a name which should assure all who heard it of the promise that they should be speedily delivered from the now threatening danger; and thus to offer this second, and yet unborn son, as a new sign to the king and people, like that already given them in Shear-jashub. But his spirit was stirred by the behaviour of Ahaz, first to offer any other sign the unbelieving king chose, and next, still indeed to couple his warnings and promises with a reference to the unborn child, but now in language not for that age but for all times: the vision rises before him, the bounds of time and place fade away, and he says,—‘Hear ye now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold a maiden with child and bearing a son, and she calls his name Immanuel (God with us).’ I think it will become more apparent that there is something of passion and ecstasy in these words, and that they must be so read in order to their adequate understanding, when we proceed to examine the view of those commentators who see no such element in them. This view, in its most complete form is, that the ‘maiden’ was the wife of Isaiah—either the mother of Shear-jashub, or another wife whom he had now married, or was just about to marry—whose next, or first, born child should be called Immanuel, and who subsequently became the mother of a third child, Maher-shalal-hash-baz. The Hebrew word which the Authorized Version here translates ‘Virgin’ is not בְּרוּלָה, which has more precisely and properly that meaning, but עֵלְמָה which, from its derivation, primarily expresses the idea of adolescence, youthful life, while assuming, rather than like בְּרוּלָה, asserting, the sense of virginity to be included in it. So that the word would be more nearly represented in English by ‘maiden’ (as I have therefore preferred to give it), or still better by ‘girl,’ or ‘lass,’ but that these words are too colloquial;—as will be seen by reference to the other passages in which the word

occurs.* And though in all these places, except Prov. xxx. 19 (which indeed seems to me no exception), the word means an unmarried woman, many scholars hold, as I have said, that it may here indicate the young wife of Isaiah, or at least another, as yet unmarried, whom he was just about to take. And the article which is prefixed to עֲלֵמָה, may then perhaps point her out as such :—*the* wife for *my* wife, as *the* master for *my* master. This explanation meets one difficulty which has not yet been completely cleared up if we take the other—the Messianic—interpretation—namely, that the Messiah was to come of the house of David, and that the words of verses 15 and 16 which point to an infant not born at the time at which the prophet was speaking, can hardly have referred to Hezekiah, the then heir to the throne, who was now probably nine years old, although we see from chapter ix. 6, 7, and xi. 1—9, that it was in this young prince that Isaiah in the earlier years of his ministry expected to see the hope of the Messiah realized. But we only solve one difficulty by another : if we compare this description of the mother of Immanuel with that in chapter viii. 3, in which Isaiah is undoubtedly speaking of his wife and unborn child, we see such a difference as makes it improbable that they are also intended directly and merely in the former words too. There is the difference between matter of fact and vision, and the mention of Immanuel corresponds with that of the ‘Child’ in chapter ix. 6, 7, and not with that of Maher-shalal-hash-baz, or Shear-jashub. There are no mental phenomena in our own day which exactly reproduce this prophetic vision ; but I think we can realize it sufficiently to see that it is intelligible as an expression of the human mind and faculties, if we recognize as its condition the expectation of a Messiah, and the grounds of that expectation in our human, as well as in Jewish, life.

There is evidence of the anticipation of a personal Messiah by the Hebrews from very early times, and of its continually acquiring a more distinct and positive character, though from the fact that it does go back so far we

* Genesis xxiv. 43 ; Exod. ii. 8 ; Psalm lxviii. 25 ; Cant. i. 3. vi. 8 ; Proverbs xxx. 19.

cannot seize its earliest forms with certainty. But the prophecy of Micah, Isaiah's younger contemporary, is an instance of the form which it was taking in the time before us. He says :—' But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel : whose goings forth have been from the beginning, from the days of old. Therefore will he give them up until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth : then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel, and he shall stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God : and they shall abide, for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.'* Even if we should assume that this prediction was suggested by that of Isaiah (though the differences indicate at least a partial independence), or suppose both to refer to some earlier prophecy, they are not the less indications of a national belief and expectation of a mysterious birth of the Messiah. Nor can we avoid connecting them with that most ancient tradition of 'the seed of the woman' on the one hand, and with that state of the national Jewish mind on the other which is implied in the narratives of Matthew and Luke, who relate the incarnation of Jesus Christ as an event miraculous indeed, yet not contrary or alien from the ancient faith, but as the fulfilment of its deepest anticipations. Nor was this faith peculiar to the Hebrews ; a belief in, or expectation of, an Immanuel—or incarnate God—has prevailed in other times, and among other nations ; and so strong was the vitality of this belief among the Greeks and Romans, that when the progress of intellect had made it impossible for them to retain it any longer in its old mythological forms, they revived it in the assertion of the divinity of the emperors ; and Tacitus, Suetonius, and Virgil tell us of various other shapes in which it was presenting itself in those times of scepticism and civilization. Brahminism and Buddhism are witnesses of the same pervading instinct of mankind ; and not less so is the reception of Christianity by every

* Micah v. 2—4.

tribe of the human race, as something not foreign, but most congenial, to their religious—that is, their deepest—wants and sympathies. We too, Christians in the nineteenth century, have some evidence to give in the matter. We stand on a vantage-ground which enables us to see the relations of things, and consequently their meaning, in a way not otherwise possible ; and we believe in Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary. That old creed is the expression to and for us of a series of facts* (not doctrines) at once historical, and in the inmost relation to our own spiritual and personal life and experience. And we must deal with these facts by the same method as that by which we study any other facts, and which to depart from is to write mere words without meaning. For non-acquaintance with these facts in a student of the Bible is what non-acquaintance with the existence of the stars and planets would be in astronomy, or with that of mountains and rivers in geology. But let us take our stand on the facts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ ; let us look for the law in the facts ; and then we shall be able to examine all past history, and especially the history of the Hebrew nation, in the light of that law. It then appears that it was no fancy, but the assertion of a law of universal ethnology, which foretold that in the race of Abraham ‘all nations of the earth should be blessed.’ The Romans were called to embody and develop in their institutions the ideas of law and of municipal and imperial government ; the Greeks to instruct mankind in free inquiry, philosophy, and art ; every other tribe and people, which has not abandoned its duty by sinking into mere brute life, has contributed its larger or smaller waters to the great stream of human life and progress ; and the Hebrews were appointed to set forth and realize in their polity and literature the true relation of man to God, and—what the mere recognition of the ‘religious sentiment’ overlooks—the relation of God to man. He who has looked into his own heart, and there learnt that his religion, his faith, consists not in this religious sentiment, but in God’s revelation and com-

* This is not the place to prove that they are facts : but I admit that if they are not my reasoning has no force.

munication of himself to him in his Son Jesus Christ, can then look around and behind him, and see that the same God did in past times reveal himself in several and successive manifestations to and through this Hebrew nation. Their whole polity is seen to be a preparation for an universal society which is to spring out of it ; their whole literature shapes itself to become a manual for that society ; that fundamental idea which philosophers say lies at the root of every nation, and by which its multitude unconsciously, and its rulers and teachers with more or less perception of its presence, are age after age urged forward to their appointed goal, as by force of irresistible law, was in the Hebrews the idea of the coming of a Lord and King of mankind no less than of their own people. They could not have been fit for any of these ends if they had been less human, and if their polity had been less in harmony with the laws of man and the universe than the polities of the Greeks and Romans : it needed to be more in harmony, and it must have been more so in fact, for more of it has been able to survive, and pass into new and very diverse forms of society. But being fit for these, because the original laws and subsequent developments of their polity and literature lay in such near relation with the ultimate laws of human nature and society, they were thus also fitted—fitted by God who has created and governs the universe according to the counsel of his own will—to become the channel of God's revelation of himself to all mankind. The question whether there actually is such a revelation in the Bible is a question of fact, and must be settled by each of us for himself, just as each settles for himself on the evidence of fact, and not of argument, whether there is a sun which gives light and heat to his body ; but to those who have found such a revelation there, it is plain that Christ being the centre of the revelation all that comes before him will have a prophetic character. All nature, all humanity, must be prophetic if it is progressive, and its progress the unfolding of the powers of a law inherent in it from the first : the philosophy of the Greeks, the municipalities of the Romans, could be nothing to us now if they—that is, the law in them, and cause of their

existing effects—had not *anticipated* all their present fruits ; and even the warlike ambition, which brought the seeds of these, and many such things, into Britain or elsewhere, was a part of the same anticipatory working of the same law. And it is not less evident that reason and historical science require us to recognize the like workings in the growth of the Hebrew commonwealth and people, and in their relations to their Creator and their fellow men.

If then we find these to be sufficient grounds for thinking that Isaiah, an actual practical politician of the day in which he lived, could have now thought and spoken of the old promise of the Messiah as the true sign of God's deliverance of the land from its invaders, then we may not unreasonably return to the belief that such was his meaning. We do not escape all difficulty ; but I think we have the difficulty of completely comprehending the life of prophecy instead of that of being satisfied with its *caput mortuum*.* And if so, we may be content to say that in the vehemence of inspiration, Isaiah exclaims, ' Jehovah himself gives you for a sign the Mother and the Child,' and then returning to the scene before him fuses into one image the birth of the Immanuel and that of his own child,† and declares, in direct reference to the latter, that before he has learnt to distinguish good from evil (come to years of discretion, as we say), he shall be sharing the general prosperity—the

* Ewald, whose sympathy with the spirit of the Hebrew prophets gives great weight to his authority on such a point, says, on this passage, that any explanation of it which does not recognize that it speaks of the coming Messiah is false.

The Dean of Westminster quotes from Merivale's *History of the Romans under the Empire* (iii. 231) the following passage:—' Scribonia was about to give a child to Octavius, Octavia to Antonius. Pollio had also two sons born nearly at the same time . . . the near coincidence of all these distinguished births is connected with one of the most intricate questions of literary history. In his fourth Eclogue, addressed to Pollio, Virgil celebrates the peace of Brundinium, and anticipates apparently the birth of a wondrous boy who shall restore the Saturnian age of gold . . . We are impelled to inquire to whom among the most illustrious offspring of this auspicious age the poet's glowing language may be fitly referred . . . After all their claims have been weighed and dismissed we are still at a loss for an object to whom, in the mind of the writer, the sublime vaticination can be consistently applied.' And Dr. Stanley then goes on to observe that ' this might be said almost word for word of the difficulty of adjusting the claims of the children of Isaiah's time—whether his own or prince Hezekiah—with the exalted predictions of the Divine child in Isaiah vii. 14—20 ; ix. 6, 7.—*Lectures on the Jewish Church*, ii. 461.

† See further, below, pp. 114, 116.

old proverbial blessing*—of his native land, which before then shall have seen the land of her present invaders—spoken of as one, because its kings were confederate—itsself laid waste, after having first lost both those kings. In about three years from this time, Tiglath-Pileser overthrew the kingdom of Syria, killed Rezin, carried away the Damascenes and Syrians into Assyria and Media;† took several cities in the north of Israel, and carried away the people of that part of the kingdom; and Pekah's own assassination by Hoshea followed this devastation of his country.‡

Isaiah has hardly uttered the promise of deliverance and restored prosperity, when he follows it by the prediction of a still greater calamity. Abrupt as is the beginning of verse 17 it seems to be rightly connected by the Masoretic punctuation with the verses which precede it rather than with those which follow. The national sins of Ahaz and his people, hardly less grievous than those of the Ten Tribes whose captivity he is predicting, come back upon the prophet; and he goes on to foretell the beginning of calamities such as the nation had never yet known since Ephraim fell away from it,—where the allusion to Ephraim indicates the link in the prophet's mind between verses 16 and 17. With the exception of the temporary subjection of Rehoboam to Egypt, Judah had hitherto preserved its national independence: but from this application of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser was to date 'its transition to a servile state from which,' observes Dr. Alexander, 'it was never permanently freed, the domination of Assyria being soon succeeded by that of Egypt, and this by that of Babylon, Persia, Syria, and Rome, the last ending only in the downfall of the state, and that general dispersion which continues to this day. The revolt of Hezekiah, and even longer intervals of liberty in later times, are mere interruptions of the customary and prevailing bondage.'

Bees did, and still do, abound in Assyria, and flies in Egypt; and it does not seem a mere fancy of the commentators, who see a propriety of allusion to the fierceness

* Deut. xxvi. 9; Josh. v. 6.

† 2 Kings xvi. 9.

‡ 2 Kings xv. 29, 30.

and stings of the one, and the filth, buzzing, and comparative feebleness of the other.* And these invading armies shall swarm over the whole land, covering the hill sides up to their rocky summits as well as the pastures of the lowlands: nothing shall escape them till the whole is waste and bare. The books of Kings and Chronicles say nothing of any intercourse, friendly or hostile, of Judah with Egypt in the reign of Ahaz; but as an alliance with this kingdom was a part of the policy of the statesmen of Hezekiah a few years later, it may have been under discussion now, as an alternative to an application to Tiglath-Pileser. And, as has been already observed, the like alliances with Egypt had probably already begun on the part of Ephraim: and that an advance of the Assyrians from the north should bring on a corresponding movement of Egypt from the south, and that they should find a battle-field in Judæa, might seem likely enough, to the far-seeing prophet. But if the Egyptians did not appear as he expected, and the land of Judah was harassed, plundered and overrun by the Assyrian's armies and the collectors of his tribute alone, in this and the next reigns, this will not appear to detract from the substantial accuracy of Isaiah's words, if we have once cleared our minds of the superstitious and profane notion that he was a sort of magician and soothsayer, and employed by God as such; and can realize that he was a man of like heart and mind with ourselves,—truly sent from God, yet not more truly than each of us must be if he is to do any work, not worse than useless in the world. We may hold this belief all the more consistently for believing also that the work of the prophets, and of the other Scripture writers, was different from that of any men before or since:—‘If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?’

* Ἡύτε ἔθνεα εἰσι μελισσᾶν ἀδινάνων,
πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομένων
βοτρυδὸν δὲ πέπονται ἐπ' ἀνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν,
αἱ μὲν γ' ἐνθα ἄλις πεποτήγεται, αἱ δὲ τε ἐνθα
ὥς τῶν ἔθνεα πολλὰ νεῶν ἀπο καὶ κλισιάων, κ. τ. λ.
Hom. II. β, 87.

Ἡύτε μυιᾶν ἀδινάνων ἔθνεα πολλὰ,
αἶτε κατὰ σταθμὸν ποιμνήϊον ἡλάσκουσιν,
ὥρην ἐν εἰαρινῇ, ὅτε τε γλάγος ἄγγεα δεύει κ. τ. λ.
Ibid. 469.

Ahaz intended to 'hire' the Assyrian razor* for his own purposes; but Jehovah would employ the same instrument to execute his judgments; and in the consequent desolations of the land, that prophecy of the child eating milk and honey would indeed be fulfilled, but after another manner than its terms seemed at first to imply. If they had believed and trusted in Jehovah for deliverance, they should have continued to eat the fat of the land; but now the cultivated fields shall be laid waste, and their cultivators scattered by the sword or famine. Here and there a surviving inhabitant, who has saved a young cow and two sheep from the wreck of his property shall feed upon the butter and milk they yield him, in an abundance which but mocks the general desolation: for the hill-sides, heretofore so carefully terraced and worked by man's hand, and in which the well-stocked vineyards once bore such a high price, are turned into mere briers and thorns, where men go with arrows and with bows, to seek wild game or to protect themselves from savage beasts or more savage men, or at best turn them into pasture-grounds for their cattle, since they are so overgrown with briers and thorns that it is useless to go there for the purpose of cultivating them again. The shekel of silver was probably equal to about two shillings of English money. The German vineyards are valued at so much a vine, and among them the vines of Johannisburg at a ducat each, according to J. D. Michaelis: those of Lebanon were rated at a piastre each in 1811, according to Burekhardt. If therefore it is meant in the text that each vine was worth a shekel, this high price must imply that they were of the choicest kinds. But a comparison with Canticles viii. 11, 12, might lead us to suppose the reference here also to the rent rather than the price.

* Knobel quotes '*Kusseh-Dagh*, the hill without a beard;' 'ὄρος κεκομημένον ὕλη,' Callim. *Dian.* 41. 'Humus comans,' Stat. *Theb.* 5, 202. 'Viridantibus comis cæsariata terra,' Apulci. *de mundo*, p. 268.

CHAPTER VII.

ISAIAH VIII.—IX. 7. THE SYMBOLICAL FAMILY.—ANCIENT AND MODERN HABITS OF PUBLIC MEN.—SILOAH AND EUPHRATES.—THE PANIC OF JUDAH, AND ITS REMEDY.—GALILEE OF THE GENTILES.—THE NATIONAL GLOOM.—THE GREAT LIGHT.—THE MESSIAH.—GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPHET'S ANTICIPATIONS.

WE have seen how Isaiah, during his late interview with Ahaz, was possessed by the idea of a child of his being a sign to the people of their deliverance from present invasion. In the first chapter of Hosea occurs a like instance of symbolic names given by a prophet to his children, and in Habakkuk ii. 2, we have mention of the practice of writing a prophecy on a tablet in easily legible characters, and hanging it up in the temple, market-place, or other public resort. And most modern commentators prefer to think that Isaiah now merely inscribed 'HASTE PLUNDER, SPEED SPOIL' in large letters on a metal or waxed tablet, the ל which the Authorized Version translates 'concerning,' being the *Lamed inscriptionis*, as in Jerem. xlix. 1, 7, 23, 28; Ezek. xxxvii. 16;—though it may be observed that the direction to 'tie up and seal the testimony,' in verse 16, is in favour of the older version, which understands him to have made a record of his expectation of the birth of the child, and of the significance of that birth, at some length. He wrote 'with a man's pen,' or 'style,'—a phrase not unlike our 'common hand,' or 'popular style;' and he took as credible witnesses that the record had preceded the event, Uriah the high priest at the time,* and Zechariah, who was not improbably the father-in-law of Ahaz and a Levite.† He calls his wife 'the prophetess,' as the wife of a king is called a

* 2 Kings xvi. 10. † 2 Kings xviii. 2; 2 Chron. xxix. 1, 13.

queen (says Vitringa) though she does not reign, and in some old ecclesiastical canons the wife of a bishop 'episcopa,' and of a presbyter 'presbytera;' and he thus claims for her a place with her husband and children* in the holy and symbolic family who are for 'a sign in Israel.' She gave birth to a child, and his name was called, in accordance with the writing, 'Haste-plunder, Speed-spoil,' that the people might understand that before he was old enough to utter the words 'father' and 'mother,'—that is, within a short but somewhat indefinite period such as we should express by 'in a year or two from his birth,'—the spoils of the plundered cities of Samaria and Damascus, the capitals of the nations now invading Judah, shall have been carried before the Assyrian conqueror in triumph.

In order to realize the practical impressiveness of such symbolic acts and names upon Isaiah's contemporaries, we must remember that Jerusalem was a very small town for size and population compared with the notion we insensibly get of a capital from our own vast London; and also that there was as little in the ways of thinking and living of that age and country as in the extent of the city to effect such a separation between a public man's political and personal life as exists in England. We respect the domestic reserve of our neighbours, and we fortify ourselves in the like reserve, by our habit of learning what they are doing that concerns us through the newspaper which we read by our own fireside. With no newspapers, and a climate which encouraged an out-of-door life, the people of Jerusalem would become as familiar with that personal demeanour of Isaiah in the market-place or elsewhere which he made a part of his public ministry, as we are with the mental habits and political conduct of Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli, though the greater part of us would recognize neither of them by sight, and still fewer know anything of their personal and private life.

After having uttered this prediction, and perhaps after an interval of time in which the political relations of the several states had become further developed, Isaiah pro-

* See verse 18 of this chapter.

ceeds to take a view of the whole Hebrew people, whom he looks on as one, notwithstanding the actual division and enmity of the two kingdoms. He sees Ephraim rejoicing, and Judah trembling, at the alliance of Rezin and Pekah; the one expecting that it will lead to the overthrow of the feeble house of David, the other admitting that their own monarchy was contemptible in comparison with the power of their enemies, and looking to Assyria as the only protection against that overthrow; but both agreeing in this, that their politics are wholly worldly, and have no reference to the government and help of the LORD of hosts, the true King of the whole Hebrew people, as indeed of the other nations from whom they hope or fear so much. The visible power of armies was to them far more real than the unseen help of Jehovah which the prophet believed and asserted to be sufficient for those who would put their trust in him and his covenant with the nation. The little brook of Siloah* might 'make glad the city of God' with its living and never-failing stream; but what was it in their eyes compared with the mighty river Euphrates, which, when it was swollen with the melted snows of Armenia—resembling the great king who recruited his countless armies in the like mountainous regions—yearly overflowed its banks, and covered the whole plain with its waters! Therefore, says Isaiah, this great river—this king of Assyria with all his hosts—shall Jehovah bring upon this people and land. After breaking

* Under the south-west brow of Ophel, which is itself the south-eastern of the hills which form the site of Jerusalem, there are two pools of Siloam, or Siloah (now Silwân), the larger of which, now nearly filled up, Captain Wilson supposes to be the pool dug by Hezekiah. These pools are supplied by a conduit tunnelled through Ophel, from an intermitting spring in the Kedron valley now called the 'Fountain of the Virgin;' and from the name, as well as because the extensive artificial provisions of cisterns, pools, and aqueducts, and the formation of the ground makes it doubtful whether there existed any other natural spring in or near Jerusalem, we may conclude that this was the living fountain, the 'softly flowing' waters of which 'made glad the city of God;' while the complicated channels through which it still passes under ground were probably among those works of military engineering which Hezekiah executed (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4; Eccles. xlviii. 17). The saying ascribed to Mahomet, that 'Zemzem (in Mecca) and Siloah are the two fountains of Paradise,' is worth quoting here. See Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, i. 493, ff; Gesenius, *Commentar.* i. 276; Kitto's *Physical Geography*, p. 411, ff.; Fergusson's *Topography of Jerusalem*, p. 69, ff.; Wilson and Warren's *Recovery of Jerusalem*, pp. 19, 233, ff.; and on Isaiah xxii. below.

over Syria and Samaria, as successive dikes which hardly for a moment delay its course, it shall pass on to Judæa, filling the land with its floods, till the monarchy and the nation it represents shall be reduced to the near peril of a drowning man, whose neck the waters have reached:—‘And the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel!’—‘thy land shall be thus overflowed, O child, whom, notwithstanding Jehovah has set as a sign that he is present with us: therefore, however the deep waters may go over us, we will still trust in that Lord, and in the promise of which thou art the standing witness.’* The name Immanuel here evidently refers back to the promise in chapter vii. v. 14; but whether it is, both there and here, altogether an ideal name for the Messiah, or whether it was given to a child of Isaiah born the year before Maher-shalal-hash-baz, or whether it was another name for this last (all which explanations have been proposed) we have no sufficient evidence to determine. The word ‘wings’ either refers, by a change of metaphor, to the wings of an army, or it may mean the extreme sides of the overflowing river.

Trusting in this Name, Isaiah defies the confederacy of Ephraim and Syria, and the power of Assyria: their alliances, their warlike array, shall be broken; their counsels shall prove foolish; their resolutions and orders shall fail of execution;—‘for God is with us.’ The exact force of the original can be apprehended by the English reader, though it can only be expressed—and that somewhat imperfectly—by the translation of the word ‘Immanuel’ here, and its retention above.

There was a general panic among the people; ‘their heart was moved as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind,’ when they heard that Syria was confederate with Ephraim; their cry was every where, ‘a confederacy†

* ‘Ac si dixisset, terra nihilominus erit tua, O Immanuel.’—Calvin, quoted by Alexander.

† There is no difficulty from the original usually meaning a *treasonable* plot. Judah might reasonably apply such a term to an alliance of Israel with heathens against her, even if the feeling with which a nation must look on any alliance for its destruction would not justify such an expression. The word, expressive of alarm, is that translated ‘Treason’ in 2 Chron. xxiii. 13.

has been made against us, and we must meet it by a counter alliance with Assyria ;' and the prophet says that he too should have fallen under the influence of this panic, if Jehovah had not laid hold of him with a strong hand, to keep him in the way of dependence on himself, and if he had not taught him to escape the fear which possessed his countrymen, by making the LORD of hosts his fear, and his dread, by sanctifying him himself, as he now in his name calls on them to do. To sanctify Jehovah* is in mind and in practice to recognize him as the *holy* God, the Lord who is *absolute* (*absolutus*), free from the limitations which hinder all other beings from carrying their wills into full operation ; and to believe with the whole heart that God can and does govern all things according to the counsel of his own will, and that what he determines does certainly come to pass, however probabilities and appearances may be against the belief. To the nation which thus sanctifies Jehovah, he (says Isaiah) will be their sanctuary—their protection against all their enemies. Such was his original covenant with both the Houses of Israel, and it still holds good. If, therefore, they will break and renounce it, it becomes a stumbling-block to them. When their statesmen endeavour to remedy present mischief and secure future prosperity by craftily playing off against one another the nations whom they cannot hope to match by force, they are attempting to go counter to the whole plan of Jehovah's government, and they will do it only to their own confusion. The greater part of 'both the houses of Israel' will refuse to listen ; but Isaiah calls on the small remnant of his faithful hearers and followers to wait with him patiently during the present calamities, and to believe that Jehovah does but hide his face for a time. Referring to the declaration—the 'testimony,' or deposition—which he had lately put on record in the presence of witnesses whom he now indicates by the word 'disciples,' he reminds them that the covenant and promise are but closed and sealed† with

* Compare Numbers xx. 12 ; Deut. xxxii. 51 ; Isaiah xxix. 23.

† Compare Isaiah xxix. 11 ; Daniel xii. 4, 9. Also Deut. vi. 8, xi. 18 ; Prov. vi. 20, 21, vii. 2, 3.

a more formal ratification by the delay in their fulfilment ; and that his words and acts and name,* and the children,—Shear-jashub (Immanuel),—Maher-shalal-hash-baz,—whom God has given him, are meanwhile his signs and pledges to them of the reality of that ratification. This people will continue their habit (from the days of Saul and earlier) of going to wizards and sorcerers, that they may raise spirits from the dead to tell them what to do in times of political difficulty like the present ; but the faithful must reply, when called on to join with them, that it is not of the dead, nor of the sorcerers, who with their ventriloquism† seem to receive directions from the shrill voices of familiar spirits, that men should inquire, but of the living God, and of the prophets who declare his will in words of reason and righteousness. Let the people, let Ahaz and his counsellors, refer to God's law and covenant, and to the promises, based thereon, which the prophet has even now been commissioned to deliver ; if they refuse to do so, there is no dawn of light in the darkness of their souls. They have chosen darkness, and shall suffer the consequences till in despair they curse their king and their God, as they lift their eyes to him in vain, and are driven back again into the night of gathering calamities.

So completely does Isaiah identify the two kingdoms of Israel as one people on the present occasion, that as the image of this darkness gathers itself around him he contemplates it not as in the land of Judah but in the north of Israel, in that border-land and debatable ground of Galilee which was politically and religiously debased by the intermixture of Canaanitish tribes with the Hebrews ;‡ the chief cities of which neither Solomon cared to retain nor Hiram to accept ;§ which lay open to the first brunt of every northern invasion ; and which was actually wasted and its inhabitants carried away by Tiglath-Pileser shortly after the date of this prophecy.|| And some of these very

* Isaiah means 'Salvation of Jehovah.'

† The Septuagint translates 'them that have familiar spirits' by ἐγγαστριμύθοι. 'Peep' is *pipiunt*, the 'squeak and gibber' of Shakspeare.—*Hamlet*, i. 1.

‡ Judges i. 30—35.

§ 1 Kings ix. 11—13.

|| 2 Kings xv. 29.

people 'of Asher, and Manasseh, and Zebulon,' * attended the summons of Hezekiah a few years after, and gave a practical recognition of the unity of Israel by coming up to Jerusalem to the passover. This fact is interesting in itself and in its reference to the passage before us, and also as raising the question whether Isaiah or his disciples may have taken any steps for the actual promulgation of this prophecy in those districts, and thus by their preaching have prepared the way for its fulfilment:—a supposition which is not improbable, considering how important, widespread, and active a body the prophets were, and how much evidence there is both in Hebrew history, and in their writings, of their extensive personal acquaintance with every neighbouring country and people. And then we may pass to another fulfilment of this prophecy, in that day when, on that same sea-coast of Tiberias, and in the city of Capernaum, was heard the voice of a greater prophet than Isaiah, preaching and saying 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven'—a greater kingdom than that of Hezekiah—'is at hand.' †

Those commentators who protest against our seeing any reference in this glorious vision to the times of Isaiah lest we should disparage its fulfilment by the coming of Christ, —and their opponents who forbid us to view it in the light of the gospel lest we should overlook the fact that Isaiah and Hezekiah were men of flesh and blood, like ourselves,—both err by a too exclusive literalness, and preference of inferior logic for philosophic insight. Why should Hebrew history alone depart from the law of all other histories, that the earlier events must be read in the light of the later, which are their necessary developments? Why should prophecy be honoured by making it out to be a mere verbal soothsaying? The student of the Hebrew prophets who dreads neither of these bugbears, but sees and reflects for himself, will find that reason and faith are in harmony, and that neither can be rightly possessed to the exclusion or neglect of the other. If the English poet of the nineteenth century, whom I have already quoted, claims 'a vision and a faculty divine' for his readers as

* 2 Chron. xxx. 1—11.

† Matt. iv. 12—25.

well as himself, we need not hesitate to recognize a like power in ourselves for the better understanding Isaiah in those parts of his discourses where, as here, he is so markedly carried out of himself. He sees the thick darkness, spiritual and temporal, which was gathering over the land, and which reached its height when the nation had generally lapsed into heathenism, and Ahaz their king had shut up the temple and substituted the worship of false gods even to the sacrifice of his own son to Moloch ; and when Ephraim had called in a heathen power to enable it to effect its fratricidal designs against Judah, and Judah had retaliated by summoning another still stronger heathen nation ; and the whole land, over which David and Solomon had once reigned gloriously, lay wasted by the sword, and tributary to the Assyrian, because abandoned by Jehovah, whom they had first abandoned. The people walk in darkness, nay dwell in the shadow of death ! But a great light breaks upon the gloom : multitudes, full of joy and gladness, throng the cities and the fields which just now were deserted ; he hears the shouts of the harvest-home, while they present the first-fruits to Jehovah ;* he sees the triumphal procession going up to the temple with the spoils of victory,† and the armour and the blood-stained cloaks of the warriors gathered to be burnt, since permanent peace is established in the land : he knows that they who sowed in tears have reaped in joy, and that the King has come to the rescue of his people ; that the yoke of the despot, and the rod of the slave-master are broken ; and that a deliverance is effected greater even than that ancient deliverance of Israel from their seven years' bondage, on the night when ' the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley ' (of Jezreel, in this same Galilee of the Gentiles), ' like grasshoppers, and their camels without number, as the sand of the sea-side for multitude,' but ' ran, and cried, and fled,' when the three hundred raised their battle-shout, ' The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon : ' ‡ and then he recalls.

* Deut. xii. 11, 12 ; xvi. 11—15 ; Psalm iv. 7.

† Compare 1 Chron. xviii. 11 ; 2 Chron. xx. 27, 28.

‡ Judges vii.

the actual debasement under Ahaz, and answers the question which his disciples must have asked him, and he must have asked himself, and his God—how this vision and its promises can be true? And the sense, in modern prose, of the mighty words of the prophetic reply, when we have somewhat unravelled the many thoughts and images which are gathered up into each word, seems to be this,—that the believing Israelites are to know that Isaiah's children, and especially the one with whom, in a moment of special inspiration he has connected the name of Immanuel, are signs and pledges that God has not forgotten his covenant nor his ancient promises of a Saviour—the seed of the woman, and the seed of Abraham and David—in whom all nations should be blessed; that this child is a witness that Jehovah the invisible King is now actually among them, notwithstanding the iniquity of both prince and people; and that he will ere long manifest his presence and power by restoring the kingdom from its ruinous condition, in the person of a royal deliverer, a Messiah, of the line of David.* And, as Jacob conferred the birthright and blessing of his race upon the sons of Joseph by saying, 'Let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;† or as the children of Israel in the wilderness were warned to obey the angel who went before them, because the 'name of Jehovah was in him;' so the Name of God, wonderful in counsel, mighty in work, the Father of their fathers and of their children for a thousand generations, the eternal Upholder of their race and their nation and of its prosperity and peace, shall be named upon, shall be in, this anointed saviour, on whose shoulder the government shall rest.‡ The eternal kingdom already lies about them, though they deny and reject it; it has its foundations in the unchangeable purpose of God, and not in the good or evil dispositions of this or that king and his

* To those for whom music not only 'charms the sense,' but also embodies thoughts and feelings too deep for words, Handel's 'Messiah' is no mean comment on these prophecies.

† Genesis xlviii. 16.

‡ Knobel quotes 'Bene humeris tuis sedet imperium:' Plin. *Paneg.* 10.
'Rempublicam universam vestris humeris sustinetis:' Cic. *pr. Flacc.* 30.

subjects ; and therefore, with no material hindrance from the one, nor help from the other, of these, the zeal of God himself will effectually carry forward the work, and spread this kingdom of righteousness and peace, without limit of time or place. Some commentators think 'mighty hero' a more accurate translation than 'mighty God,' as the word (הִיָּוִד) is used in such a sense in Ezekiel xxxi. 11, and xxxii. 21, in the former of which places it is applied to Nebuchadnezzar : but we know that the Old Testament does not scruple to 'call them gods to whom the word of God came ;' and the other meaning seems the better, explaining it as I have here done.

I need not repeat what I have already said as to the difficulty of such a complete insight into the relative activity of the imagination and the logical faculties in the Hebrew prophets, and into the degree of definiteness with which the expectation of a Messiah presented itself to Isaiah and his contemporaries, as would authorize a positive opinion how far the prophet, in uttering the words before us, was thinking of his own times and circumstances, or looking beyond them. Yet I am unable to form any distinct notion of Isaiah as a man and a Hebrew, and as a prophet of Jehovah in contrast with those muttering wizards he denounces, without supposing that, at this period of his life and ministry, he must have connected the thought of 'the Child' with Hezekiah, on whom the name of the mighty God had been actually named,* and who (being now a boy nine or ten years old) may already have given promise of the piety which afterwards distinguished him :—and that he would not, at this time, have considered that his prediction would be quite inadequately realized if the youthful prince should, on his accession to the throne of David and Solomon, renew the glories of their reigns, in which peace and justice were established at home and abroad, through trust in Jehovah and his covenant :—reigns of which the historical facts must be studied in the light which the Book of Psalms, and such passages as 2 Chronicles ix. 1—8, throw on them. I say at this time, because we shall have occasion to inquire what was

* Hezekiah means 'Jehovah strengthens.'

the effect on Isaiah's mind when he did see a restoration under Hezekiah of such a reign of righteousness and prosperity ; and whether his expectation of the Messiah did not eventually assume a very different form from what could have been possible to him at the time we now speak of. There is a method through this whole book of Isaiah's prophecies which reflects a corresponding progress in the prophet's own mind ; and this method offers us a clue through difficulties which are otherwise impassable, if we will only hold it fast and follow its guidance fairly.

CHAPTER VIII.

ISAIAH IX. 8.—XII.—EPIC UNITY.—OBSTINATE ENERGY OF THE HEBREW RACE.—
LAWLESSNESS OF THE TEN TRIBES.—LEGALISM OF JUDAH.—THE KING OF
ASSYRIA.—GODS IN THE IMAGE OF MEN.—THE SCOURGE OF NATIONS, AND
ITS WIELDER.—ANCIENT ROADS.—THE KING OF THE STOCK OF JESSE.—
THE GOLDEN AGE.—FUSION OF CONFLICTING ELEMENTS IN A NATION.—
CONSEQUENCES OF THE REVOLT OF EPHRAIM.—DEPORTATION OF JEWS IN
ISAIAH'S TIME.—THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH—ITS RELATION TO THE WORLD.
—THE WATER OF SALVATION.

THE strophical arrangement of Isaiah ix. 8 to x. 4, is supposed by many commentators to mark it for a distinct prophecy, delivered soon after the last; while they see in the allusion to Samaria, as actually taken by the Assyrians (chap. x. 10), proof that the following prophecy from x. 5, to the end of chapter xii. cannot date earlier than the sixth year of Hezekiah. But these arguments are not conclusive. There is no reason why a style of discourse in which historical narrative, political oratory, and poetical rhythm as well as imagery, are equally in place, should not embody in itself a refrain several times repeated and then dropped, just as in other instances we find it containing a song or psalm.* Nor is it impossible to explain, by the ordinary prophetic usage of the past for the future, a reference to the taking of Samaria not more, though not less, definite than many other prophetic descriptions which were undoubtedly made before the event. On the other hand, we have the probability of a general adherence to chronological order in the actual arrangement of the book, the indications of an unbroken

* Chap. xxvi. 1, xxvii. 2; and compare the repetition in Amos i. and ii. The recurrence of this refrain in verse 25 of chapter v. seems to me no sufficient reason for supposing that this passage has been severed from the earlier prophecy. I cannot think that it is necessary even to alter the Masoretic divisions in order to make the refrain finish each period.

current of thought,* the unity of subject of the whole portion, chapters vii. to xii. inclusive, and, lastly, the probability of which I believe the reader will see more evidence the longer he considers the subject, that here as throughout the book the author's own hand may have been at work, arranging, retouching, and fusing together the records of discourses originally distinct. These chapters form a kind of epic whole (itself a part of a still larger whole), in which the internecine enmities of the Ten Tribes among themselves and with Judah, and the alliances with the heathen nations by which they support these enmities, only to involve themselves in the common ruin, are traced to their first causes, and the loss of national unity and freedom shown to be the consequence of the loss of that spiritual unity and liberty which can only spring from and be sustained by the living faith of king and people in the unseen but present Lord of the nation and of each member of it : subjection to the heathenish, godless Assyrian power, is shown to be the proper and effectual punishment of the national sin : and a restoration in and through the reign of a righteous prince of the line of David is declared to be certain, because God himself is pledged to it by a covenant which men's evil doings cannot cancel. The prophet stands as on a hill or tower, and sees the past and the future, the distant and the near, in one completed whole in which all events and all wills have but subserved the almighty Master-will ; and, therefore, we find here an instance of the propriety of the word epic, which has with so much force been applied to the writings of the Hebrew prophets generally by Mr. Maurice.† In the second edition of the work referred to, this author has indeed omitted this and much more of formal comparison between the Hebrew and classical types of literature, apparently lest his readers should mistake a vital relation for a technical correspondence, and fall into the bondage to names into which that mistake always brings us. But if we take

* As in verses 24—26, of chapter x., compared with chapter viii. 8—10 ; x. 6 with viii. 1, 4 ; x. 27 with ix. 3 ; x. 21 with vii. 3 (Shear-jashub) ; xi. 1—5 with ix. 6, 7 ; and xi. 13, 14 with ix. 12, 20, 21.

† *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, 1st edition. See also *Educational Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 226.

care how we call the prophets 'epic poets,' and then fancy we understand them, we shall find a real light thrown on the subject by this word, which is farther explained by Coleridge's observation that epic and dramatic poetry are alike founded on the relation of Providence to the human will; but that while in the latter the will is exhibited as struggling with fate, in the former a pre-announced fate (or Providence) gradually adjusts and employs the will and the events as the instruments for accomplishing its designs:—*Διὸς δὲ τελείετο βουλή.**

The Jewish historian, in relating the fall of Samaria, as the punishment of national sin, says, 'Yet Jehovah testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets and all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and statutes, according to the law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.'† And here we have one of these repeated warnings, in this 'word which Jehovah sent unto Jacob,' by Isaiah. The Ten Tribes had already suffered many an infliction; their political organization had often been broken up by civil wars and foreign invasions, as the house of unburnt brick dissolves into mud before the rain; and the flower of the people had been cut down as lavishly as men cut down the cheap sycamores: but with that stoutness of heart, that obstinate toughness which in all ages to the present has marked this race, the men of Ephraim and Samaria seem to rise superior to every calamity; like Solomon,‡ they will change the sycamores for cedars, and they will replace the bricks with hewn stones. The conversion of Damascus from an ancient enemy to an ally encourages them in their hopes; but Jehovah will confound their policy by bringing the conquerors of Damascus upon them.

The histories mention inroads of the Philistines into Judah, though not into Israel, at this period; but we can believe the latter did not escape, as these marauders were not likely to miss an opportunity, especially when once in movement. The 'Syrians' are either the same allies whose

* *Literary Remains*, vol. ii. pp. 159, 164.

† 2 Kings xvii. 13.

‡ 1 Kings x. 27.

arms, on their becoming tributary to Tiglath-Pileser, would at once be turned against Ephraim; or the word (*Aram*) may be used in a sense wide enough to include the Assyrians themselves. Tiglath-Pileser took Damascus, killed Rezin, and carried the people away captive; and we find Ahaz going there to meet the Assyrian, when it is related that he took the pattern of an altar at Damascus, and adopted the gods of Syria, 'because they helped them,' an account which can only be applicable to the gods of Tiglath-Pileser.*

'The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them,' and therefore they shall be smitten again and again. It will not be a mere political change of an Assyrian satrap for an Israelite king, but every rank, every household from the highest to the lowest, shall suffer:—though youth is the season of joy, the young men shall find that it is not so when Jehovah, the source of joy, has no joy in them; though mercy and pity are the natural right of the fatherless and widow, they shall find that God himself refuses them these; and the reason is, that all of them, man, woman, and child, are demoralized and corrupted; one may be a hypocrite, and another an open sinner, but all speak, because their hearts believe, the language of that folly which is contrary to, and which denies and excludes, the knowledge of God. That in the middle of this threatening of universal calamity upon head and tail, palm-tree and rush, we should find an explanation that the 'tail' is the prophet that teacheth lies, and not the common people, as the context demands, does not require the supposition of an interpolation by a later hand, as some say. We have constant occasion to notice the Hebrew disregard of that mere logical balance of sentences which indeed soon becomes an intolerable pedantry in any other language: and here Isaiah's knowledge of what the teachers of a people ought to be and might be, and of how great is their personal responsibility, stops him before he can complete the explanation of the tail and the rush, and he turns it as though he had said, 'No, the common people are brutal

* 2 Kings xvi.; 2 Chron. xxviii. See too the use of '*Aram*' in Isaiah xxxvii. 11.

and degraded enough, but the men who have been the cause of this debasement are more guilty, and more contemptible than they: they are the dregs of all.'

Civil war and foreign invasion shall rage through this reprobate people like the fire with which the husbandman clears the ground of briers and thorns. The wickedness of the land becomes its own punishment, and burns with a fury which is indeed the wrath of God, while its fuel is the people themselves. The images of slaughter and fire—at once fact and symbol—suggest that of famine so desperate that 'no man shall spare his brother,' nay 'they shall eat every one the flesh of his own arm.' Ephraim and Manasseh were brethren, and sons of the same mother, but they appear as rivals in the earliest records,* and their names seem to be here put to represent the factions which made the history of the kingdom of Israel in great part a history of tyrannies, rebellions, and anarchies, which were gathering to their climax at this time, when the assassination of Pekah seems to have been followed by a nine years' interregnum and anarchy, as far as we can trace and make out the lines of a picture which is perhaps indistinct from the very confusion of the times.† And the prophet completes the description of this miserable war of brethren among themselves by saying that they shall be together against Judah.

The strophical form connects the following verses (x. 1—4) with the preceding, as the exclamation with which they begin does with those that come after; and in both are corresponding links of the subject itself. The prophet has described the sins of Ephraim in a general manner; but on the mention of Judah he proceeds to denounce what we know from the whole tenour of his discourses he felt to be the worst form of the guilt of his own people, with a particularity which it is perhaps not fanciful to attribute to his thoughts being now directed homewards. The Ten Tribes were far more ferocious and anarchical than the men of Judah: there are many indications in the latter of that national respect for law which so characterizes the

* Genesis xlviii. 13—20; Judges viii. 1—3, xii. 1—6.

† Compare the historical accounts and dates, in 2 Kings xv. with Hosea vii. 7.

English, that it has been observed,* that though history attributes to us our share in national wickedness, our crimes have almost always been committed under colour of law, and not by open violence,—as in the series of judicial murders in the reigns of Henry VIII., Charles II., and James II. And thus Isaiah, recurring to Judah, denounces the utmost severity of God's wrath in the day in which he, the righteous Judge, shall come to visit 'an hypocritical nation,' whose nobles and magistrates decree, and execute, unrighteous decrees,—'To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!'+ They are satisfied that they are safe in their heartless selfishness, with peace at home and protection abroad restored by their statecraft and their alliance with Assyria. But while they thus rejoice at home, 'desolation cometh from far.' To whom will they fly for help when God has abandoned them? Under whose protection will they leave their wealth, their dignities, their glory, which they have been heaping up for themselves? Captivity or death are the only prospects before them. And yet, as though no judgments could sufficiently condemn and punish their utter wickedness, the prophet repeats,—'For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.'

Where the evidence is so incomplete, and the arguments of learned commentators so nearly balanced, I do not dogmatize on the date of chapters x. xi. xii.; but on the assumption which I have already preferred, that these chapters may be taken with the three preceding ones to form one prophecy, the scope of the portion before us will be this:—Isaiah turns from Ephraim and Judah to Assyria with an apparent abruptness which does but half conceal the real connection or rather unity of all the parts of his subject: ignoring the petty statecraft by which Ahaz and his counsellors were bringing Assyria upon themselves as

* By Lord Campbell.

† 'To reave the orphan of his patrimony,
To wring the widow from her custom'd right.'

Second Part of King Henry VI., v., 2.

well as on their enemies, the prophet goes at once to the heart of the matter, and shows us Jehovah come to execute justice upon the nations, and the Assyrians as the rod and instrument of that justice; and he employs the whole force of his imagination to do justice to 'the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks,' in order that he may give more emphasis to the scorn with which Jehovah, and the servants of Jehovah, look on his pretensions and power, and that he may bring into fuller contrast with this kingdom of the world, which Ahaz and his people make the sole object of their hopes and fears, that other kingdom which stands, and ever shall stand, in the will not of man but of God. The old Babel monarchy, which carried its traditions back to the days of Nimrod that mighty hunter before Jehovah, and was in all ages the very type of sheer, godless, arbitrary power, had, in the time of Isaiah and the generation before him, renewed its strength under the Assyrian kings, and become the terror and the scourge of all the neighbouring countries; for the LORD of hosts, the Lord of the whole earth, had sent this northern conqueror forth, and 'given him a charge to take the spoil and to take the prey.' One nation after another had fallen before him; his satraps sat in the thrones of their once independent kings; the national gods of ancient kingdoms could not preserve their shrines nor their votaries from his hands; Samaria might trust to her golden calves, but they were within his grasp; and the cherubims of Jerusalem, or what other unseen images might be hidden and worshipped in her holy of holies, would soon prove equally powerless:—thus he boasted, little thinking that he was the merest tool in the hands of an unknown Master, who was exactly limiting his actions by the purposes for which he was being used. Calno, or Calneh, is probably the modern Neffer about sixty miles south-east of Babylon. Carchemish was on the Euphrates, and is supposed to have commanded its passage there.* It appears from the Assyrian Inscriptions to have been a chief city of the Hittites. Hamath, still existing as Hamah, on the Orontes, was the capital of

* 2 Chron. xxxv. 20; Jerem. xlv. 2.

Upper Syria, and is mentioned frequently in Hebrew history as a place of importance. It also occurs in the Inscriptions. Arpad must have been in Syria, but its place is not known.

'I took the cities, I gave them up to pillage, I slew the inhabitants;' or, 'I devastated the country, I took away the king, with his priests and his gods, his warriors and his wives, his gold, silver, and cattle, I carried all the men and women into slavery, I brought there the people of other cities;'—such are the records which meet us every where in the newly-deciphered annals of these Assyrian kings, and such the subjects of the sculptures which ornamented their palaces. But the reference is also constant to the god in whose strength they have done these things, and whose worship they have thereby established every where: and it is interesting to notice the apparent one-sidedness with which Isaiah here and elsewhere omits all reference to this religious spirit of the conquerors, while his words are otherwise (except for the poetry) so exact a counterpart of the Assyrian phraseology. It is the one-sidedness of the practical man who goes straight to the single point on which all the rest really depends. The prophet who, without phrase of qualification, told the strictly religious Jews that the whole ritual which they were practising in exact conformity with the law, was an unbearable abomination,* would have asserted in equally plain terms that the religion of Assyria was no religion. God, the living and true God, had revealed himself to Isaiah, and to Isaiah's nation, as the Being in whose image man was created, and in whom therefore justice, honesty, truth, kindness, and every other properly human virtue which in man feebly struggled for existence, had its own perfect, absolute reality, without the limits or the defects of the finite. The Lord of man, the Jehovah, or I AM,† had made himself known to Isaiah as he had to Moses, and as he does still to each of us: and when the prophet turned to look at the 'gods of the nations' he saw at once that they were something different—nay, exactly reverse,—in kind. On the one hand, God was the

* Isaiah i. 11—14.

† Exodus iii. 14.

prototype of man ; on the other, man of God. The God of the Assyrian was made in the image of the Assyrian, was the projected form of his own character. The spirit which was embodied in that dignified human figure with its eagle's head and wings, was but the spirit of the actual Tiglath Pileser or Sennacherib, with his wide and resistless swoop, his ravenous maw, his royal cruelty.* And when he led out that terrible cavalry, in the ranks of which there was no ungirt warrior, no unbent bow, no horse's hoof not hard as flint, and whose shout struck panic into all who heard it,† when he went forth to conquest at their head, from that palace and city of which we have not altogether to imagine the magnificence, we know that the winged lions and the human-headed bulls whom he took with him, full of fierce life, were but imperfectly represented by those which he left behind, carved in stone, at the portals of his own house, or the house of his god. We may see from the vision in chapter vi., that the distinction between the two kinds of religion—that which God reveals to man, and that which man makes for himself—is not obliterated or enfeebled, but brought out more plainly, by the fact that the cherubims at Jerusalem were, in other respects, the counterparts of these sphinx-like creatures of the neighbouring nations : we see the same human element, the same religious sentiment, the same capacity for worship, the same human methods of expressing this sentiment and capacity : the difference is between the nation, or the man, in whom this human element is met by a real unveiling and communication of God himself, from above, and those in whom it is not so met, and who therefore substitute a projection of themselves for its independent existence. At the same time we must not, in our objective study of the heathen world, overlook that we Christians (like the Jews of old) do habitually combine much of this heathenish temper with the true faith which has been given us. This is plain if we look in any direction where the particular religious prejudice no longer blinds us. We

* See the majestic figures who have captives flayed, or their eyes put out, in their presence ; as, for instance, Sennacherib at Lachish, in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon* (1853), p. 150. Truly eagle-like men.

† Isaiah v. 26—29.

can see, for instance, how much of the harsh notions which Calvin and the Puritans mixed up (as we now perceive so unworthily) with their apprehensions of God, was the reflex of men's ordinary notions of justice, and of magisterial duty as well as right, in those days, and which did not shock them when attributed to God, because they held them, as of course, in all their worldly dealings. So, the new form which the 'doctrine of election and reprobation' took, in the religious revival of the last century, did but reflect the narrow class notions which took for granted that a gentleman was, and would be to the end of time, a finer species of creature than a working man. And in our own day, are not the notions of a God who is pleased with lighted candles, or in whose character mere good-nature or 'unconditioned wisdom' has superseded all regard for the distinction between crime and virtue, but varieties of the same vice? It may indeed be rejoined that all higher conceptions of God's character are but the reflex of the higher human sentiments, as the other of the lower ones. And then we come to the question of fact which, as I have said before, each man must decide for himself.

To return to the Assyrian conqueror:—He does not suspect that he is the instrument in the hands of Jehovah, much less desire Jehovah's help or guidance; and therefore, according to the prophet's view of things, he does not rely on any god, but simply on his own military power and political sagacity. He first boasts that he does all things by his own prudence and strength, and then dwells exultingly on the nature of his doings: valiant man that he is, he puts down one nation after another, taking possession of their treasures, transplanting the inhabitants to other cities and lands, and obliterating the ancient limits of what from independent kingdoms are now but provinces in his great military empire. He has come upon nation after nation as it dwelt in peace with all the fruits of peace, and has 'found their riches as a nest;*' he has gathered all the

* Sennacherib says, 'They had set their dwellings, like birds' nests, in fortresses on the tops of the mountains.'—Oppert, *Inscriptions des Sargonides*, p. 46; Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften*, u. d. A. T.

Xenophon says of the attempt of Epaminondas to surprise Sparta,—*ἔλαβεν ἀντὶν τὴν πόλιν ὥσπερ νεοττίαν, παντάπασιν ἔρημον τῶν ἀμυνομένων.*—*Hellen.* vii. 5, 10, quoted in Grote's *History of Greece*, x. 454. This

earth as one gathers the eggs from which he has first driven off the terrified hen-bird. But she would hover round her rifled nest and its plunderer with a trepidating flight and piercing cry, than which no movements and sounds in the brute creation express more anguish ; while these spoiled nations dare not show even such instinctive signs of a broken heart, but know a depth beyond that depth:—‘there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or chirped.’ But such boasting is as if the axe or the saw should boast itself against him who uses it ;—as if the staff of dead wood should lift him who is not wood but the living man who holds it.

This passage (verses 13—15), itself a specimen of the whole context, is quite a study, political and artistic : political for him who seeks the law of the rise and fall of military despotisms ; artistic, as an illustration of the working of the imagination, the ‘power by which one image or feeling is made to modify many others, and by a sort of fusion to force many into one, . . . and which, combining many circumstances into one moment of consciousness, tends to produce that ultimate end of all human thought and human feelings, unity, and thereby the reduction of the spirit to its Principle and Fountain, who is alone truly One.’* And the prophet and poet goes on with the same luxuriance of imagination, and the same severity of righteous faith. ‘The Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall send among his fat ones leanness :’ the allusion seems to be to fat herds, ‘fat bulls of Bashan ;’ and these one would almost say suggested the thought of the oaks of Bashan, if the previous mention of the axe and the saw did not seem to reverse the succession of the images which crowd in on every side. The ‘glory,’ the whole equipments and ammunitions, the pomp and the splendour of the warrior king, shall be burnt up, and the Light of Israel shall be the consuming fire. If the Assyrians are to be thus destroyed it is because they are mere noxious thorns and

alarm must have been as thrilling to a Greek as the danger of Jerusalem to a Jew : and it is interesting to notice the universal language of passion in remote times and peoples.

* Coleridge's *Literary Remains*, vol. ii. pp. 55, 56. These lectures on the genius of Shakspeare throw much light on that of Isaiah.

briers, only fit for burning. If their power entitles them to be rather compared with lofty forest trees, and their wealth and extended dominion to the 'fruitful field' with its vineyards, and olive-grounds, and gardens, still they shall be consumed, even as they have often wasted such scenes with fire in their marches : they shall be destroyed utterly, 'soul and body,' for they are no trees but men, and like men wasted by sickness they shall perish. And then, to gather up the whole once more in the picture of the heaven-kindled conflagration of the forest with its lofty trees and its jungles and the fruitful fields lying all about it,—we see of all these trees, which it would have once required many and skilful enumerators to reckon, so few that a child can count and write them down, while the child himself, in the midst of the desolation, suggests new trains of thought not foreign to the subject.

If Assyria is to be reduced to such a remnant, so is the people, the two houses, of Israel. The LORD of hosts has decreed a righteous execution of judgment upon his guilty people through the land, and though they were as the sand of the sea in numbers, only a remnant of them shall be left. But that remnant shall return* unto their God and King : they will have learnt the lesson sent through so much suffering; and instead of continuing to trust in Assyria, and their alliance with that worldly and faithless power, they 'shall stay upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.' And then Isaiah, with that feminine tenderness which so frequently shows itself in his sternest denunciations, hastens to exclaim, 'Therefore, thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian;' it is true that he shall for a time oppress you with a bondage like that which in old times you endured when you were the serfs of Pharaoh or the tributaries of Midian ; but as the slaughter at the rock of Oreb was an effectual scourge to that scourge of Israel, and as the rods of the Egyptian taskmasters were broken in the hour in which Moses stretched out his rod upon the sea, so shall it be now ; for yet a little while, and Jehovah will raise

* *Shear jashub* are the words of the original, where there is also a play on *Jashub* and *Jacob*, such as *Isaiah* is fond of.

up his scourge, and lift up his rod, and his indignation against his people shall cease in the destruction of their, and his, enemies. In that day they shall be freed from the galling yoke and the heavy taxes of Assyrian suzerainty; and Judah shall not merely be freed from her oppressor, but shall be freed by restored life and vigour:—the metaphor of the yoke suggests that of the bullock bursting it by the fatness of his neck, or rejecting it in the lustihood of his strength, as in Deut. xxxii. 15; Hosea iv. 16, x. 11.

Isaiah then gives a vivid description of the march of the Assyrians upon Jerusalem, as it 'flashed upon his inward eye,' with all the distinctness of sense, or perhaps as it was actually occurring at the time. Sargon may have thus threatened Jerusalem from the north, in the campaign in which he claims to have subdued Judah*—either immediately after he had taken Samaria, or in one of his subsequent invasions of Philistia. Whether as vision or as fact, this march is better connected with Sargon than with Sennacherib. For though both the traditional name of the 'camp of the Assyrians' which still existed in the time of Josephus, and the nature of the ground which lays Jerusalem most open to an attack on the north, make it probable that this was the quarter in which Rabshaketh did actually, a few years later, 'shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion,' the main army was before Lachish, and he would not have brought his force round by the defile of Michmash.† The places here mentioned, and several of which were found, still retaining their names, by Messrs. Robinson and Smith,‡ lay in succession between the northern frontier of Judah and Jerusalem: and the remains of a square tower and large hewn stones which they found at Jeba, opposite to Mukhmàs (i.e., Michmash), and supposed to be Gibeah of Saul, and the like marks of Mukhmàs itself having been

* 'Il reduisit la Judée (Iahouda), dont le site est lointain.'—Oppert, *Les Inscriptions des Sargonides*, p. 34. Compare Mr. Sayce on Isaiah xxxvi.—xxxix., in *The Theological Review* for Jan., 1873.

† Schrader supposes Sennacherib to have sent a detachment of his army from some point north-west of Jerusalem.—*Keilinschriften u. d. A. T.*, p. 251. But as Sargon made a campaign through the same countries, this prophecy may refer to the anticipation of a like attack from him.

‡ *Biblical Researches*, vol. ii. p. 110, ff.

once a place of strength, taken in connection with the accounts in 1 Sam. xiii., xiv., and 1 Mac. ix. 73, make it intelligible that this may have been a route which Isaiah might reasonably expect the invaders to take. The high road indeed no longer runs that way, and Dr. Robinson says that the common approach to Jerusalem can never have lain through these deep and difficult ravines: but it has been pointed out to me* that while it would sufficiently vindicate the propriety of the picture to observe, that an Assyrian army would direct its course not by what might be the high road, but by what was the line of still unplundered towns and villages, the geographical probability is all in favour of the route described having been the actual northern highway. For the present road, which is so much more practicable, lies along the water-shed, where the ground, although better for engineering purposes, is worse for houses or cultivation from the want of water: and such roads, in which the convenient junction of extreme points is the main object, are a comparatively modern invention, though the most in accordance with our notions of a highway. In Isaiah's time, even the main roads would be those which had been formed, stage by stage, for the communication of each town or village with the ones immediately before and behind it; and these towns would, in the present state, have lain thickest in the very line in question: for while the water-shed is just to the west, and 'lower down the slope, towards the Jordan valley, all is a frightful desert,' the steep hill-sides, in which these towns were clustered, from Anathoth to Michmash, still show signs of that 'strong and fertile soil' which (as has been explained before) only needs terracing to make the rock a garden, and which, even as it is, Dr. Robinson here found producing 'fields of grain occasionally, and fig-trees and olive-trees everywhere.'

* By my brother, General R. Strachey. And this explanation by a military engineer is confirmed by Mr. Grote's solution of the like difficulty:—'I do not share the doubts which have been raised about Xenophon's accuracy, in his description of the route from Sardis to Ikonium; though the names of several of the places which he mentions are not known to us, and their sites cannot be exactly identified. There is a great departure from the straight line of bearing. But we at the present day assign more weight to that circumstance than is suited to the days of Xenophon. Straight roads, stretching systematically over a large region of country, are not of that age: the

The prophet sees the enemy's troops as they enter the frontier city Aiath, or Ai, which Joshua had once taken from the Canaanitish king: they pass through Migron; and, meeting no resistance at Michmash, the northern key to the defile, they there leave their baggage lest it should impede the rapid advance with which 'they pass the Pass,' and establish their quarters at Geba, which commands the southern approach to Jerusalem. The inaction and stupor which had allowed this position to be mastered, is now succeeded by open panic: Ramah trembles; Gibeah of Saul—the birth-place of the king of whose feats, and the feats of his son Jonathan, in discomfiting countless hosts of Philistines in these very defiles, the old national stories told—Gibeah is fled; Laish hears the shrieks of Gallim; and wretched Anathoth* answers not with her echoes alone, but with a too real cry of despair, for an enemy, whom neither human pity nor fear of religion moves, is upon the city of Levites; Madmenah is flown like a bird, and the inhabitants of Gebim have carried away their goods for safety; every hill-top within sight of Jerusalem is covered with those terrible horsemen from the north; at Nob the Assyrian is seen to halt for the day, preparatory to the assault, and 'he shakes his hand against the Mount of the daughter of Zion.' Then the vision gives place to another; the prophet recalls the previous promise, with the previous image it was expressed under:—Jehovah cuts off the top branch, the ornamental head of the tree, and the whole forest of trees and of underwood falls under his stroke.† The root of the word which I have

communications were probably all originally made between one neighbouring town and another, without much reference to saving of distance, and with no reference to any promotion of traffic between distant places. 'It was just about this time that King Archelaus began to 'cut straight roads' in Macedonia,—which Thucydides seems to note as a remarkable thing (ii. 100).' *Hist. of Greece*, ix. 23, note.

* 'The prophet plainly alludes to the name of the place (lit. *the Answers*); and with a peculiar propriety, if it had its name from its remarkable echo.'—Lowth, on the verse.

† 'Thus yields the cedar to the axe's edge,
Whose arms gave shelter to the princely eagle,
Under whose shade the ramping lion slept.
Whose top-branch overpeered Jove's spreading tree,
And kept low shrubs from winter's powerful wind.'

Third Part of King Henry VI., v., 2.

translated 'top branch' means 'adorn,' so that it is the chief or top bough, forming the ornamental head of the tree, which is alluded to.

The image is now transferred to the state and king of Israel, which is also to be cut down to the stump, like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. But out of that stump, and from its living roots, shall grow up a scion—one of those slender shoots which we see springing up from, and immediately round, the stock of a truncated tree.* A king of the race of Jesse shall sit on the throne of his fathers, in accordance with the covenant made with David :—

'I have made a covenant with my chosen,
I have sworn unto David my servant,
Thy seed will I establish for ever,
And build up thy throne unto all generations.'†

The Spirit of Jehovah shall not merely direct this son of David by occasional and transient impulses but shall abide continually with him, habitually filling him with the spirit, the very life, of insight into the principles and laws of God's government of the world, and of discernment how to apply those principles to actual circumstances, so as to bring the latter into harmony with the former; he shall receive the spirit of true statesmanship, enabling him to understand and to rule, not ideas and things, but men; he shall have that personal knowledge of God which is the living source of love and reverence for him; his delight in this knowledge and fear of God shall enable him accurately to discern the like disposition in others, so that, with an eye purged from the film of sense he shall not fail to recognise the cause of truth and righteousness in his kingdom; and when he has declared his righteous sentence, he will ever stand ready to execute it with prompt and strict justice. Then the wolf and the leopard shall make their homes with the lamb and the kid, while a little child leads the calf and the young lion together. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah :—this is the

* 'Vos modo, milites, favete nomini Scipionum, *soboli* imperatorum vestrorum, velut *accisis recrescenti stirpibus*.' Liv. lib. xxvi. c. 41. Quoted by Vitringa.

† Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4.

reason why this golden age (described in language which Lowth says is not equalled by the classical or the Arabic and Persian poets) shall come in the days of the righteous king. It is because his kingdom, which is the kingdom of Jehovah, shall extend its influence over, and be recognized by, the whole earth. From the history of the reigns of David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, we see that when there was a righteous king in Israel, he not only governed his own people in wisdom and the fear of Jehovah, promoting education and civilization in that spirit of the ancient law and constitution which is embodied in the book of Deuteronomy, and thus establishing truth and justice, peace and happiness, religion and piety, throughout the land, but that he at the same time (as we might have expected) exercised a humanizing influence over the neighbouring nations, gave them glimpses at least of the superiority of the God of Israel over their own gods, and disseminated among them principles of moral and political order which continued to germinate more or less effectually notwithstanding the resistance of national vice, ignorance, and superstition. But these, and such as these, were but the shadow of good things to come : the acts of Jewish kings, like the words of Jewish prophets, were but various and partial ways of repeating, rather than of realizing, the great cardinal promise made to Abraham, or the great prophetic ideal of the Righteous King which was revealed to Isaiah and the rest of the prophets. But that better thing which God had provided for us, that they without us should not be perfect, is actually come in the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. By the manifestation of the Righteous King in his own person, the golden age has been made far more actual, and we brought into a far closer connection with it, than was possible or even conceivable in the days of Solomon or Hezekiah. Then the chosen race itself had but a dim knowledge of God, and the nations of the earth could but hear of him through the testimony of the Jewish people and its kings ; but now a greater than Solomon, even the LORD himself, is come into each nation which receives his gospel and his church, and abides in it as its ever-present though invisible King. True it is, that even

in those kingdoms of the world which have become the kingdoms of our LORD Christ, we do not yet see all things put under his feet; the ideal is still far from completely one with, and transcendent through and over, the actual, the heavenly over the earthly; but by him who has an eye to see, the one may be plainly discerned everywhere hid under the other, capable of being developed, nay, waiting and ready to be revealed in ever new and more glorious forms. Our part is to believe this heartily, heartily to take our appointed share in the work of realization; and not the less so, because we learn more and more every day that we do work, how small our share, how large God's share, in the work must be; that man's chief business is to

‘Leave to Heaven
The work of Heaven, and with a silent spirit
Sympathize with the powers that work in silence.’

I have followed our version in the use of the word ‘earth’ in verse 9, though the original might equally be translated ‘land;’ for ‘land’ would limit the promise of this kingdom of righteousness to Israel, and the reference to the ‘peoples’ and the ‘nations’ in the next verse, compared with such passages as chapter ii. 2—4, xix. 18—25, is in favour of the wider sense. But the idea of the universal kingdom is certainly not so prominent here as in those and many other places, being subordinated to that of the bringing back ‘the outcasts of Israel’ and the ‘dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth’ to their own land and Lord, and of their reunion into one people as at first.

Jacob, in his prophetic statement of the fortunes of his sons, disregards the rights of primogeniture, and gives the pre-eminence to Judah and Joseph, and in the family of the latter to the younger son Ephraim. Hence, from the time of the exodus, these two were regarded as the leading tribes of Israel. Judah was much more numerous than Ephraim, took precedence during the journey in the wilderness, and received the largest portion in the promised land. But Joshua was an Ephraimite; and Shiloh, where the tabernacle long stood, was probably within the

limits of the same tribe. The ambitious jealousy of the Ephraimites towards other tribes appears in their conduct to Gideon and Jephthah. Their special jealousy of Judah showed itself in their temporary refusal to submit to David after the death of Saul, in their adherence to Absalom against his father, and in the readiness with which they joined in the revolt of Jeroboam, who was himself of the tribe of Ephraim. This schism was, therefore, not a sudden or fortuitous occurrence, but the natural result of causes which had long been working. The mutual relation of the two kingdoms is expressed in the recorded fact that 'there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and between Asa and Baasha, all their days.' Exceptions to the general rule, as in the case of Ahab and Jehoshaphat, were rare, and a departure from the principles and ordinary feelings of the parties. The ten tribes, which assumed the name of Israel after the division, and perhaps before it, regarded the smaller and less warlike state with a contempt which is well expressed by Jehoash in his parable of the cedar and the thistle, unless the feeling there displayed be rather personal than national. On the other hand, Judah justly regarded Israel as guilty not only of political revolt, but of religious apostacy, and the jealousy of Ephraim towards Judah would of course be increased by the fact that Jehovah had 'forsaken the tabernacle of Shiloh,' that he 'refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved.'* If Solomon had, like his father David, retained to the last his faith in the one God of Israel, and in that maxim of government which David laid down in his 'last words,' that 'he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God,' and if Rehoboam, Solomon's son, had followed in the same path, it is probable that they might have solved this difficult political problem of fusing into one nation various conflicting parties and interests, of which I believe the solution has always failed or succeeded according as unity

* Alexander's *Prophecies of Isaiah*, note on verse 13; his authorities are:—Gen. xlix. 8—12, 22—26, xlviii. 19; Numb. i. 27, 33, ii. 3, x. 14, xiii. 8; Josh. xviii. 1; 1 Sam. iv. 3; Judges viii. 1, xii. 1; 1 Kings xi. 26, xiv. 30, xv. 16; 2 Kings xiv. 9; Psalm lxxviii. 9—11, 60, 67, 68.

of national faith, and equality of civil rights and justice, have or have not been established : for the centralization of military force, whether domestic or foreign, is not a fusion, but a suppression and (if it lasts) a destruction, of the elements of national life. But Solomon forgot David's dying counsel that he should 'keep the charge of Jehovah his God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it was written in the law of Moses ;' and his own prayer when he came to the throne, that Jehovah would give him 'an understanding heart to judge his people, to discern between good and evil,' and to follow the footsteps of David 'in truth, righteousness, and uprightness of heart before God,' and thus, and not with the arbitrary hand of the military chieftain, or the selfishness of the oriental despot, to make it his aim to govern 'this God's so great people.'* The men were not equal to the occasion, though by God's providence their failure was made to illustrate

* 2 Sam. 'xxiii. 3 ; 1 Kings ii. 2-4 ; iii. 6-9. In referring the reader to these passages, it may not be out of place to notice an opinion that David's subsequent directions to Solomon 'to bring down the hoar heads of Joab and Shimei to the grave with blood,' are expressions of a revengeful malice inconsistent with a character of piety and justice. A moderately thoughtful examination and comparison of the various notices of these men and the transactions in which they figured, including their deaths, will make it plain that Joab, though a faithful supporter of David's throne, was a brutal soldier, with an influence over the army which made him independent not only of the king but of the laws ; while Shimei was a powerful chieftain of the house of Saul, and ready to proceed to any opposition to the reigning dynasty. David was unable to dismiss Joab, and, in a temper as humane as politic, he included the rebel Shimei in the general amnesty when he recovered his crown, and declared, 'There shall no man be put to death this day in Israel.' But he warned Solomon—and Solomon's mode of acting on the warning gives the fair historical interpretation of its precise meaning—that these two men would be his most dangerous enemies, the one of his person and house, and the other (who 'shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet') of his endeavour to govern the nation by civil law and justice, and not by force ; and that therefore he must watch them narrowly, and if they did again break out, he must not be deterred by a misplaced reverence of pity for their age, or the hope they could not do much harm in their few remaining years, from executing strict justice on them. Joab joined a conspiracy for deposing Solomon, and Shimei's reason for quitting the surveillance imposed on him, was believed by Solomon to be, and probably was, a pretext for a like course. Burke, who cultivated his love of justice and hatred of all oppression by the study of the Bible and of real life and history, shows incidentally that he thus read this story of David, when (in one of his speeches on financial reform, I think) he warns his hearers that 'they must not spare the hoary head of inveterate abuse.' David did several very cruel as well as arbitrary acts : but we need not resign the use of our reason in reading the Bible for fear men should call us superstitious.

the political law as clearly as their success would have done. And though the student of history feels the same regret at this permanent disruption of what should have been organic and mutually supporting members of a one Hebrew commonwealth, as he does at the always frustrated hopes of a national unity in ancient Greece; yet in the one case or the other a deeper insight into what was possible in the then stage of the political growth and education of the human race, teaches us that the evil was the only condition on which it was practicable to secure the far greater good which was secured, and has become a part of the imperishable heritage of mankind. The experiments of Sparta and of Athens, and still more those of Macedon, and, above all, of Rome, show us that the problem of how to unite liberty with centralization, could not be solved in that age. And so no doubt it was with the Hebrews; though their worship of One God at Jerusalem gave them facilities for true national unity known nowhere else before the times of the Gospel. It has been observed that the scriptural account of the power of Solomon resembles, almost word for word, some of the paragraphs in the great inscriptions at Nimroud. 'Solomon reigned over the kingdoms from the river [Euphrates] unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought him presents . . . a rate year by year . . . and served Solomon all the days of his life. . . . He had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even unto Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river.'* And when we thus see on what a precipice Solomon stood, and what his descendants and their people might have become; when we reflect what not only Israel, but the world would have been, if instead of a Bible we had had the annals of a race of Hebrew Sargons and Sennacheribs, and in the fulness of time a Kehama—an incarnation of evil—instead of a Son of God, we shall perceive that if ever man spoke by the spirit of God, or did a deed for which all posterity should call him blessed, it was that radical and revolutionist the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, who

* 1 Kings iv. 21, 24; 2 Chron. ix. 24, 26. Quoted, with the above observation, by Mr. Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 635.

stirred up the young soldier Jeroboam to plot against his master Solomon, and openly and successfully to rebel against Rehoboam. At the same time, as I have already observed, we must not overlook that this, like the other instances of prophets instigating rebellion, belongs to the earlier history of the nation: the later prophets habitually recognize that highest discovery of constitutional politics, that in the maturer age of a commonwealth all reforms can and must be effected by a discussion which, though absolutely refusing all restraint to its words, keeps steadily within the limits of the existing laws, till it can change them by the power of words alone. Of the increased clearness with which this momentous distinction is apprehended by our non-beneficed classes in England, we owe more than is usually acknowledged to Mr. Cobden, and his colleagues in the Anti-Corn Law Agitation.* By precept, practice, and success, they have made the truth so popularly intelligible, that we may hope that it is as firmly established among us as the case admits of. For in politics as in every other region of human thought and action, it is not the mere establishment of maxims and traditions, however rational, but the presence of a moral and religious life in the honest and earnest application of these, which upholds a constitution.

The hope and promise of a reunion of the two houses of Israel, which Isaiah utters, are repeated by Ezekiel:† we cannot doubt that such a prospect must have animated the pious and the wise of the nation in each age: and the historians, in terms which show their own appreciation of events such as had not been ‘from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah,’ describe a resort of persons from all parts of the northern kingdom to keep the passover at Jerusalem in the reigns of both Hezekiah and Josiah, followed by a general visitation of the cities not only of Judah and Benjamin, but also of ‘Ephraim and Manasseh,’ and ‘Simeon even unto Naphthali,’ for the purpose of purging the land of the altars, images, and groves

* Written in 1851.

† Chapter xxxvii. 15–28.

of the false gods.* And from these statements of almost exclusively ecclesiastical historians we may infer, with little danger of being carried away by fancy, that there were corresponding facts in the civil condition of society, and that in the transient gleams of peace and prosperity which Judah experienced after the fall of Samaria and the Ephraimite monarchy, Jerusalem, and the throne, as well as the temple there, became the recognized seat of authority for such of the people of the Ten Tribes as had not been carried away by the Assyrians, and as preferred dwelling in towns or villages with the habits of civilization and of civil order, to those of mere pastoral families or tribes wandering in the desert at their own will. It was indeed but a feeble restoration of the times of David and Solomon, or even of the earlier commonwealth; nor was that a better state of things which prevailed from the days of Ezra to those of Christ, who proclaimed the fact of a deeper ground of unity than that of descent from Jacob, and of whose meeting with the woman of Samaria we may apply, in reference to this point, his saying, that a greater than Solomon was there.

Ephraim and Judah shall be at one; together they shall sweep down like eagles upon the hill-country of Palestine, and on the Arab tribes that wander through the eastern deserts; Edom, Moab, and Ammon, shall again become tributaries as they were in the best times of the monarchy: even the great nations of Egypt and Assyria shall give up their captives,—for in that day Jehovah will not only dry up the Red Sea, as of old, but will extend the same power to the Euphrates, striking its deep streams into many shallow ones, and thus making a way for his people to return out of both of these lands. Pathros is Thebais, or Upper Egypt; Cush is Ethiopia, and also Arabia Deserta, along the east coast of the Red Sea; Elam is Elymais, adjoining—and often used to include—Persia, as well as Susiana, and Media; Shinar, Babylonia; Hamath, a chief city of Syria; and the Islands of the Sea are the isles and the coasts of the Mediterranean.

* 2 Chron. xxx. 1 to xxxi. 1; 2 Kings xxiii. 1—23; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 25 to xxxv. 18.

The Chronicles mention as a great national calamity the numbers of captives taken by the Syrians, Ephraimites, Edomites and Philistines, during the reign of Ahaz.* Joel speaks of the Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines, selling the Jews to the Grecians,† and Amos seems to allude to a similar sale to the Edomites.‡ Isaiah refers elsewhere (chap. xvi. 4) to Jews who had fled their own country to escape domestic or foreign oppression; and in the times of Jeremiah we have like instances.§ And Hezekiah, when Rabshakeh was before Jerusalem, and Sennacherib in possession of the country and cities round, desires the prophet to ‘lift up his prayer for the remnant that is left.’|| And comparing these and similar¶ proofs of the practice of the Jews, and of their enemies with that of all the other nations of antiquity, we have abundant evidence—even without referring to Sennacherib’s account of his having carried off the whole population which dwelled around Jerusalem**—that during the reigns of Ahaz and his successor there was such a dispersion and captivity of the people as that from which Isaiah here promises the restoration. That the fulfilment of this promise in the succeeding reign of Hezekiah was most inadequate, must be evident to him who sets the outward possibilities of the occasion against the unbounded magnificence of the prophetic ideal: yet it need not be doubted that such a fulfilment as the case did admit would have been brought about by the king, and the relations of those of his subjects who were in exile or slavery: for in the latter years of his reign, when ‘many brought gifts unto Jehovah to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth,’ he would have been well able to demand the restoration of his people with effect. The reference to the Philistines may be compared with Sennacherib’s statement that ‘the nobles and the people of Ekron put their king Padi, his ally, and the vassal of Assyria, in irons and delivered him to Hezekiah

* 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 8, 17; xxix. 9.

† Joel iii. 6.

‡ Amos i. 9.

§ Jeremiah xli. xlii.

|| Isaiah xxxviii. 4.

¶ As 2 Kings xv. 29; xvii. 6, 18.

** Rawlinson, *Outline of the History of Assyria*, p. 23. Oppert, *Inscriptions des Sargonides*, p. 45; Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften, u. d. A. T.*, p. 176.

of Judæa, with hostile intentions, under cover of night.* The smiting the Euphrates into seven streams, Grotius, with his wonted clear and practical appreciation of fact and history, refers to the partial dismemberment of Assyria by the defection of the Medes and Chaldees, which, according to Herodotus, took place about the same time with Sennacherib's retreat from the invasion of Judæa and Egypt: for the reconciliation of the Greek historian with the native records, we must wait till they are more thoroughly deciphered and translated.

The prophet finally concludes this prophecy, the structure of which we have so often paused to admire in its various parts, with a hymn, after the manner of those which in the Book of Psalms have these two thousand years been reckoned among the most precious treasures of men, women, and children, all over the world. It is a hymn of the restored church, which Isaiah puts into her mouth 'in that day.' I say the restored church, rather than the nation, because the whole matter as well as tone of the hymn—as indeed the name hymn would signify—marks that church is the proper word here. It is as impossible to understand the history and literature of ancient Israel as it is those of modern France, Germany, or England, if we do not duly appreciate the presence and influence of the church in each. And by the church of the Hebrews I do not here mean their national and endowed priesthood with its prescribed laws and rituals for national worship and education, and which are analogous to the like institution among ourselves; I speak of that spiritual brotherhood of which the ecclesiastical 'estate of the realm' in any nation is the proper symbol, and which embodies and expresses itself in and by that symbol in as far as it can; but which cannot limit itself to that or any other earthly form, because it is itself heavenly, and transcends all the partial and imperfect forms of earth, even when they are at their best, and still more so when (as often happens) they have become deeply, or

* See the references in the last note. Sir Henry Rawlinson, M. Oppert, and Dr. Schrader give different versions of the last words. I follow Dr. Schrader.

even hopelessly, corrupted and decayed. This brotherhood has God for its father, and for its elder brother and head the Son of God, whom the Apostle beheld in vision, while ‘ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,’ sang—‘Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation : and hast made us unto our God kings and priests ; and we shall reign on the earth.’ And what St. John contemplated and declared with the eye and tongue of the old Hebrew seers, St. Paul has set forth in the language and by the methods of European philosophy ; while the life and substance of the teaching of both is contained in the last discourses of their Master and ours, who said, ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us : that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.’ The world and the church are the two universal opposites : not the world merely in some particularly bad sense, but in all senses, good and bad ;—the world which hates and resists the church with active enmity ; the world which hinders the church by its indifference, selfishness, corruption, and decay ; and also the world into which the church is in all ages infusing its own, or rather its Lord’s, unworldly, heavenly spirit ; which shall be at last entirely renewed by that spirit, and shall ‘believe’ that the church and the Lord of the church were indeed sent by the Father of all, that his Name may be glorified in and through all. This church, which Socrates and Plato hoped to find, and dwell in, after death,* but which Jesus Christ and his Apostles tell us, and we know is actually set up and open, upon earth, was to the Hebrew nation neither a mere future hope, nor

* ‘This law of degeneracy [according to Plato] exists in the commonwealths of the earth, just because they have not understood and steadfastly contemplated that original model, that perfect idea of a commonwealth, which is also the original model and perfect idea of a human character. It is a contradiction and absurdity then to allege the fact of this degeneracy as a proof that no such model is to be found. But after all these inquiries does the thought still linger about the mind, *where* is it to be found ? Plato answers (book ix. p. fin.), ‘*Ἄλλ’ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται τῇ βουλομένῃ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν.*’ Is it wonderful that such words should have suggested to some of the Christian fathers the recollec-

a complete present possession. It was present, but present in the germ, and not in the fruit or flower. It deepened, sanctified, spiritualized their family relations, and their national life, literature, and worship; we see it pervading their traditions, history, laws, and the writings of their psalmists and prophets, and forming the channel through which God 'spake to them at sundry times and in divers manners;' but we see also that the prophets themselves, when most conscious of the reality of the divine Word and Spirit imparted to them, felt that they wanted something more, namely, a universal instead of a partial, occasional, measured, gift of the Spirit. 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given' (that is, not 'without measure,' as it is elsewhere expressed) 'because that Jesus was not yet glorified;' and therefore, though the prophets knew that their nation had really been based from the first upon God's covenant, and upheld by his presence as their Lord, still they felt that they needed 'a new covenant,' and looked forward to a day when Jehovah should put his law in their hearts, and when they should no more have occasion to teach each other how to know the Lord, because not merely law-givers, kings, and prophets, but the humblest peasant and child, should know him for himself.* It may be said that we are even now no better off than they were, for it is the world and not the church which still predominates everywhere; and that we think ourselves happy if we can infuse some little spiritual life into corrupt and decayed family and national institutions, while the expectation of their perfect renewal by the presence and power of a universal and heavenly brotherhood set up among us here on earth, is but a hope for the remotest future, if even that. It may be so: our Christian faith may have sunk not merely to the level of the Jewish prophet, but to that of the Greek philosopher: we may only hope that perhaps we may find what we want in some other world after death. But then

tion of those words in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which describe the hopes of the head of the covenanted people, 'Ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεμελίου ἐχούσαν πόλιν ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ Θεός; or those which describe this hope as accomplished, 'Ἡμῶν τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει?'—Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, pp. 153, 154 (2nd Edition).

* Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34.

the difference between them and us is that both of them believed and accepted all that it was given them to know, but we do not. The Kingdom of God *is* manifested among us, but we deny its presence. We deny it socially even when we seem to acknowledge it individually; and the consequent taint and curse of worldliness which pervade everything, even our religion, can only be got rid of in proportion as our social as well as our individual life is renewed by faith in Christ, who, being the Head, is the source of life in all the relations which the members of the body have with one another.*

But while we recognize this distinction of the Jew from the Christian as well as from the Gentile,—that the first had the church, though yet in its germ and promise,—it does not follow that we are to disregard the various and successive stages of its development among the Jews themselves. And in this and the other earlier prophecies of Isaiah, we should go much against their actual language and tone, as well as against probability, if we supposed that the youthful patriot grown up in the prosperous reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, and having seen only two or three years of national calamity, was looking at things as Jeremiah looks at them in the passage quoted above, when a moral and material decay of many generations had brought the commonwealth to the lowest depression, and spiritual hope was stimulated by the utter despair of earth. It is more in accordance with all the facts to believe that Isaiah, when he puts this hymn in the mouth of the remnant of Jehovah's people, recovered from the four corners of the earth, was anticipating such a restoration of the national church as he did witness a few years after, in the reign of the pious Hezekiah,—a restoration which consisted not merely in the re-opening the temple, and re-establishing the daily worship and the yearly festivals, but much more in the humble, holy, devout spirit of repentance, hope, and faith, in which the king and people confessed before God that it was for their sins

* The reader will see that I have followed Coleridge's exposition of the relation of the universal to a national church, in his essay on Church and State.

that 'their fathers had fallen by the sword, and their sons, and their daughters, and their wives, were in captivity;' and that they now 'turned again to him, the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, believing that he would return to the remnant of them who were escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria, and that their brethren and their children would find compassion before them that led them captive, so that they should come again into their own land, because Jehovah their God was gracious and merciful, and would not turn away his face from them if they returned to him.* The historical narrative is indeed a striking counterpart of the prophecy; the influence of the man who uttered the latter is manifest in the proceedings chronicled by the former; and each makes the other an intelligible and coherent portion of one history.

The Talmudists refer the words, 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation,' to the custom of making an oblation of water on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, when a priest fetched water in a golden pitcher from the fountain of Siloah, and poured it mixed with wine on the morning sacrifice as it lay on the altar: while at the evening offering the same was done amidst shouts of joy from the assembled people. It was in obvious allusion to this rite that, 'in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink;' but as it is not prescribed in the law of Moses, it has been doubted whether it dates back earlier than the times of the Maccabees. It is however at least as probable that the Asmonean princes should have restored an ancient as ordained a new rite: such a rite, to acknowledge God's gift of the water without which harvest and vintage must have failed, would always have been a likely accompaniment of the feast in which these were celebrated; and the like acts of Samuel and Elijah, though for different purposes, perhaps go in confirmation of the ancient existence of such a practice.† Be this as it may, the idea conveyed by the image of the living water will be the same:—'Such as is the refresh-

* 2 Chronicles xxix. xxx. xxxi.

† 1 Samuel vii. 6; 1 Kings xix. 33—35.

ment of water from the spring, and from the clouds of heaven to the parched lips and the thirsty land, in this our sultry climate, such shall be the refreshment to your spirit in that day from the salvation of Jehovah. He shall dwell among you, and his spirit shall be a well of life to the whole nation.' Ewald pronounces that chapter xii. cannot be by Isaiah:—'Words, images, turns of expression, as well as the whole subject matter and spirit—none are Isaiah's; and this is so manifest that to produce further proof of it were superfluous.' If any one could be qualified to speak thus peremptorily it would be Ewald: yet Knobel, who is himself ready to use the like argument on other occasions, is here content to say curtly that Ewald has no ground for this judgment. I shall have occasion to recur to this subject immediately.

CHAPTER IX.

ISAIAH XIII., XIV.—GENUINENESS OF THE PROPHECIES ON BABYLON.—SCEPTICAL CRITICISM—ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS—NOT POSITIVE OR CONSTRUCTIVE.—ORTHODOX CRITICISM.—RESULTS OF THE CONTROVERSY.—TRADITIONAL COMMENTS CONFOUNDED WITH THE TEXT.—HEBREW HISTORICAL NOTICES OF BABYLON—ASSYRIAN NOTICES.—BABYLON SACKED IN ISAIAH'S TIME BY PERSIANS, AND PERHAPS BY MEDES.—BABYLON A DIAGRAM OR IDEOGRAPH.—ARGUMENTS FROM STYLE.—SUSPENSE BETTER THAN HASTY DECISION.—FINAL OVERTHROW OF THE EMPIRE OF FORCE.

‘THE burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see.’—Many of the most learned of the modern commentators maintain that this Title must be pronounced to be spurious, and the prophecy at the head of which it stands, as well as several others in the book, and especially chapters xl. to lxvi., to have been written towards the end of the great Babylonish Captivity. The question is not one of Hebrew scholarship, for the authenticity of these chapters is maintained by scholars not incompetent opponents to those by whom it is denied. Nor is it altogether a question of religious belief, though it has been a good deal confused and complicated by the assertion that it is so. The belief that the book forms a part of the revelation of God to man has indeed avowedly guided the arguments of those critics who maintain its authenticity as the work of Isaiah; but the more thoughtful of them admit that the two conclusions do not stand or fall together, while there has been no deeper or more religious appreciation of the nature of prophecy than that of some of the critics who continue to assert the late authorship of the portions of the book now under consideration. The question is, in truth, mainly one of critical method; and its solution, or such an approach to it as the existing evidence may finally make possible, can only be obtained

by a more strict, and so to speak scientific, regard to induction and verification of the facts and inferences than has been hitherto shown on either side. It may not always be possible in historical criticism to separate fact from theory so completely as in physical inquiry; but the distinction is not the less real; and there is much of the criticism upon the writings of Isaiah which bears the same relation to a really historical investigation as ingenious speculations on the origin of the world and its inhabitants do to the observations and inductions by which the foundations of the physical sciences have been slowly but surely laid. Still there is also much on both sides which is really sound, and the controversy has already been fruitful, and promises to be more so. This will be apparent from a sketch of its history.

The insight—political and religious—of Milton and Grotius enabled them to anticipate the principles and method required for the thorough understanding of Hebrew prophecy; but this insight was imperfectly shared even by the great Vitringa, who may be taken as the type of the best commentators on Isaiah up to the latter years of the eighteenth century. These commentators never seem to have distinctly asked themselves what manner of man Isaiah actually was, and what his actual relations to other men in his own times, or in those which have followed. Not that they denied, or altogether failed to recognize, that Isaiah was a real man, patriot, and politician; but the experience of their own Christian faith had convinced them that they had another and deeper interest in the words of Isaiah than in those of any patriot or politician, ancient or modern; they accepted the common explanation of this experience—‘that Isaiah was inspired, and his prophecies a part of the revelation of God to man;’ and then they adopted, and employed all their learning and ingenuity to maintain, the notion—in former times floating vaguely on the surface of a deeper and truer belief, but now reduced to a coherent system—that not only was ‘all Scripture given by inspiration,’ but that (contrary to the constant declaration of Scripture itself) inspiration was confined to the writers of Scripture, and consisted not in

the perpetual presence and indwelling of God's spirit in men, but mainly and eminently, though not entirely, in special arbitrary and miraculous communications from God through the prophet or apostle, who was himself little more than a mechanical instrument for the purpose. And, therefore, while they give a predominance to the religious and Christian interest of Isaiah's prophecies, to which it can only be objected that it is shown apart from their national and human interest, instead of in the entire union in which the two stand together in the prophecies themselves, we find them maintaining that these prophecies are full of miraculous predictions of future events, which could only have been made known to the prophet because God had seen fit to suspend or supersede the laws of nature and the human mind for the occasion.

The publication of Bishop Lowth's work on Isaiah in 1786, gave a new interest and a new direction to the study of the subject. While Lowth accepted the ordinary orthodox views of prophecy, it was his main object to exhibit Isaiah as a poet not inferior to the great classical models, and to remove the obstacles to his being duly appreciated as such, partly by literary illustrations, and partly by a new translation in which many real errors or obscurities of the authorized version were avoided, while the whole was made to assume a form more in accordance with classical, or supposed classical, canons. The last point he endeavoured to attain by a free use of conjectural emendations—his own, and those of ancient versions or modern scholars—of the text, in places of which it was not then seen that they were already in harmony with the canons of Hebrew, and often even of English, taste, and could only be injured by being altered. And though these particular conjectures were soon set aside by Hebrew scholars, as wanting alike in authority and probability, yet the spirit of them, as well as of the criticism they were intended to support, appeared in new forms. Lowth had employed himself in making it clear that Isaiah was a real poet: certain of his German contemporaries and successors proposed to prove by Lowth's methods that he was a real patriot, politician, and man of flesh and blood, like

Socrates, or Cicero, or the men of the eighteenth century itself. Destructive analysis and hypothetical reconstruction were the critical methods of the age, and the commentators on Isaiah employed them as their contemporaries were employing them upon the classical authors. The destructive criticism did much service by the sceptical questioning and skilful anatomy with which it refuted many figments of the commentators and swept away much accumulated rubbish; but when the combined efforts of this criticism during forty years had reduced the unquestioned portions of the writings of Isaiah to five chapters and six verses of a sixth,* it had plainly gone too far, and its results were

* 'Si enim ea perlegeris quæ Koppius, Doederlinius, Eichornius, Paulus, Rosenmüllerus, Bertholdus, Gesenius, alii, de authentia oraculorum Esaiæ doceant, invenies perpauca oracula intacta restare: scilicet ea quæ legentur c. i. 3—9, xvii. xx. xxviii. xxxi. xxxiii.' J. U. Möller, *De Authentia Oraculorum Esaiæ*. Havniæ, 1825. Dr. Alexander, in the introduction to his *Commentary*, gives the following account of some of the different contentions as to what should be received as the genuine writings of Isaiah:— 'Chapter vii. 1—16 is regarded by Gesenius as probably not the composition of Isaiah, who is mentioned in the third person. This opinion is refuted by Hitzig, and repudiated by the later writers. Koppe's idea that the twelfth chapter is a hymn of later date, after being rejected by Gesenius and revived by Ewald has again been set aside by Umbreit. The genuineness of chapters xiii. xiv. 1—23 is more unanimously called in question on account of its resemblance to chapters xl.—lxvi. which this whole class of critics set aside as spurious. Chapters xv. and xvi. are ascribed by Koppe and Bertholdt to Jeremiah; by Ewald and Umbreit to an unknown prophet older than Isaiah; by Hitzig, Maurer, and Knobel to Jonah; by Hendewerk to Isaiah himself. Eichorn rejects the nineteenth chapter; Gesenius calls in question the genuineness of vv. 18—20; Koppe denies that of vv. 18—25; Hitzig regards vv. 16—25 as a fabrication of the Jewish priest Onias; while Rosenmüller, Hendewerk, Ewald, and Umbreit, vindicate the whole as a genuine production of Isaiah. The first ten verses of the twenty-first chapter are rejected on the ground of their resemblance to the thirteenth and fourteenth. Ewald ascribes both to a single author; Hitzig denies that they can be from the same hand. Ewald makes the prophecy in chapter xxi. the earlier; Hitzig proves it to be later. Koppe, Paulus, Eichorn, and Rosenmüller, look upon it as a *vaticinium ex eventu*; Gesenius, Ewald, and the other later writers as a real prophecy. The twenty-third chapter is ascribed by Movers to Jeremiah; by Eichorn and Rosenmüller to an unknown writer later than Isaiah; by Gesenius and De Wette to Isaiah himself; by Ewald to a younger contemporary and disciple of the prophet. The continuous prophecy contained in chapters xxiv.—xxvii. Knobel shows to have been written in Palestine about the beginning of the Babylonish exile; Gesenius in Babylon, towards the end of the captivity, and by the author of chapters xl.—lxvi.; Umbreit at the same time but by a different author; Gramberg after the return from exile; Ewald just before the invasion of Egypt by Cambyzes; Vatke in the period of the Maccabees; Hitzig in Assyria just before the fall of Nineveh; while Rosenmüller, in the last edition of his *Scholia*, ascribes it to Isaiah himself. Chapters xxvii.—xxxiii. are supposed by Koppe to contain many distinct prophecies of different authors, and by Hitzig several successive compositions of one and the same author; while most other writers consider them as forming a continuous whole. This is regarded by Gesenius and Hitzig,

like those astronomical investigations in which it was at last found that the observers had been measuring only the errors of their instruments.* Nor were the earlier attempts at reconstruction of the text more satisfactory, while the critic's conception of prophecy as a phenomenon of the human mind was limited by analogies and illustrations from the intellectual experiences of the eighteenth century, which we now know to have been quite inadequate, and to have excluded from observation other experiences, deeper but not less real or less human than those were. These new critics of the eighteenth century were, in spite of their desire to be positive, too frequently carried away by theories to which they required the facts to conform, or else—if they were quite intractable—they rejected them even though with no better reason than that they had a 'critical feeling' that they were not genuine. Their orthodox opponents—though in many respects not less addicted to narrow theories—had this great advantage, that they were impelled by their religious feeling to maintain the authenticity of the book, and therefore to insist upon taking all the facts, and not merely such a selection from them as would fit a pre-conceived theory; while they were obliged to employ all their resources of learning and argument to meet the reasoning by which those facts were brought into question. As the controversy went on, which it did with great activity, the results became apparent in a gradual and important modification and enlargement of view on both sides: and the investigations and arguments of such writers as Gesenius, Hitzig, and Ewald, on the one hand, and Möller, Hengstenberg, Hävernicks, and Alexander, on the other, seemed—when I published the first edition of this book in 1853—to justify my expectation that we were approaching the final settlement of the question. But since then there has been a pause, if not a re-

notwithstanding the objections of previous critics, as a genuine production of Isaiah; but Ewald doubts whether it may not be the work of a disciple. Most of the writers of this school join chapters xxxiv. and xxxv. together, as an unbroken text, but Hitzig no less confidently puts them asunder. Rosenmüller, De Wette, and others, set these chapters down as evidently written by the author of chapters xl.—lxvi.; while Ewald on the other hand maintained that their identity is disproved by a difference of style and diction.'

* Herschel's *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*, p. 278, ed. 1830.

action, instead of a farther progress to such a settlement. Professor Delitzsch has thrown his great learning into the scale of an extreme recognition of miraculous prediction throughout the writings of Isaiah, and Mr. Cheyne adopts, with scarcely any modification, Ewald's treatment of the text, while we hardly hear that there are still critics who do not accept the methods or conclusions of either school. Yet there are those who believe that each of these schools has adopted a faulty and defective method of criticism, and they cannot wonder that each has finally refused to be convinced by the other, nor doubt that more satisfactory results may still be expected from a thorough application of a better method. There are some minds which are so content with the logical argument that the Almighty Lawgiver can suspend his own laws, and may be expected to do so for adequate reasons, as to overlook the necessity for the farther inquiry as to the grounds on which ecclesiastical tradition assumes—instead of proving—the fact that such miraculous interferences have occurred; while there are others to whom the charm of a speculative hypothesis is such that they do not inquire very narrowly into the inductions and verifications on which its worth must depend. But neither of these is the true method, at once scientific and historical, by which the question will eventually be solved, in as far as a solution is possible. The opposite, but equally arbitrary, modes of appealing in any difficulty either to a miracle or a reconstruction of the text, to explain the obscurer facts of the case, have again and again been found unnecessary as we have learnt how to look at those facts in a stronger and clearer light. On the one hand we are perceiving that in proportion as we can discover the law of God's working in events where our predecessors only saw his power, and can consequently perceive the resemblances between God's former and present manner of governing the world where they saw chiefly the differences, and therefore supposed a miracle where we recognize a law, this does not dishonour but honour God, and instead of weakening our recognition of the reality of God's presence and power among us, does in truth add a new and stronger evidence of it to ourselves and to others. And at the same time

we have been learning that in order to sustain the assertion that the Hebrew prophet was a real poet, orator, and man, we must make a complete induction of the facts of Hebrew literature and history, instead of contenting ourselves with analogies from our own or any other age and nation. But to do this we must begin by taking the text as it is, as the basis of our investigations, and not first reconstruct it in accordance with such analogies.

We can perhaps hardly expect the Germans, to whom the work has hitherto been mostly left, to carry this controversy much further than they have already done. But here, as in the classical literatures, English criticism has still something to do, if we will understand and judge of the German investigations for ourselves, instead of merely reproducing them. No Englishman approaches Ewald in his knowledge of the facts of the Hebrew language, literature, and genius; and perhaps no Englishman except the late Professor Maurice has entered more deeply than Ewald into the spirit of Hebrew prophecy; yet this makes it the more instructive to see how, in all questions of criticism, Ewald's 'shaping spirit of imagination' is so strong that its creations have to him all the reality of historical facts. Thus on the subject before us he says* that though we cannot trace the history of the existing collections of the prophecies by external evidence, yet we may by help of that which is internal, or derived from analogy, arrive at some extremely weighty truths, which present themselves to us as scattered marks and vestiges of that history. And then he proceeds to give—not some of those general and philosophical views in which he is such a master but—a series of historical or quasi-historical statements as to the period at the end of the exile of which we have no 'external' accounts. He says that 'at that time a multitude of new prophecies, often of great poetical beauty, and written as it were on thousands of flying sheets, were published and collected; and that it is easy to understand how this flood of new writings soon made it seem expedient to make and circulate new selections of the most important of the old works on prophecy.' And he then gives in great detail a narrative

* *Die Propheten*, i. 55—60.

of the steps by which one of these selectors arranged the Book of Isaiah as we now have it, even pointing out two little passages which the said selector ('whom one may easily give credit for being something of an author himself'), added to give a finish to certain sections of the work. Parts of this narrative are qualified with such words as 'probably,' 'easily conceived,' &c., but others are not less supported by the countervailing 'manifestly,' or 'undeniably;' and the whole is such a statement of events which happened, without being recorded, 2,300 years ago, as no Englishman would venture to make, with all the documents before him, of the manner in which the works of any author of his own generation were composed and arranged. Ewald has (as his readers know) farther applied this supposed power of recovering the past to a reconstruction of the whole Hebrew literature upon which he has based his History of Israel and his versions of the Prophets and the Psalms, the whole of which he has re-arranged as they 'must' have been. And though even the Germans think Ewald fanciful, yet in the main question of the genuineness of Isaiah's writings Gesenius, Hitzig, and Knobel are quite as hypothetical as Ewald, though their differences as to minor points (as on that of the authorship of chapter xii.) indicate an element of individual fancy in their conclusions. These things are interesting to the student of the national distinctions of the human mind, but I point them out here because I believe that we must understand them, in order to understand this question of the Isaian, or non-Isaian, authorship of these chapters. The Germans are so learned, and their insight is often so deep, that we might be tempted to take their authority on this point, though their arguments seem so inconclusive. But such instances as that from Ewald may serve to warn us what are the proper limits of their authority, and where we must begin to judge for ourselves. They offer us diamonds and glass beads as of equal value: we may know the difference, though they alone know where to find the former.* In the case before

* M. de Bunsen says, 'Modern criticism has been left to the Germans, for whom reality has no charm.' And of 'the Protestant critical school in Germany,' he adds—'what they know how to handle best is thought, the ideal part of history; what is farthest from their grasp is reality.'—*Hippo-*

us I believe that in order to investigate this question of the authorship of the book of Isaiah we must throw aside one half of the German criticism, and heartily avail ourselves of the other half. We must take Ewald's profound and comprehensive view of Hebrew prophecy and of what, therefore, a prophet could say and do ; and Gesenius's and Knobel's lucid expositions of the history and politics of Isaiah's times ; and then we must study the facts with our own eyes, though by help of the light these critics shed on them.

The grounds on which it is held that the disputed chapters have been erroneously attributed to Isaiah are, that the writers were manifestly living in the time of the Great Captivity, the events and circumstances of which they describe or allude to—not as ideally conceived but—as actually existing around them, and (as might be expected if that were so) that the language, style, and ideas, of these prophecies is different from that of the unquestioned writings of Isaiah. There are cases in which we may decide on the authorship of a book upon such internal evidence, but where there is external evidence also we must start from that, and not from the other. The practical difference is very great. The book before us is not an anonymous manuscript recently found in a Syrian monastery, the author of which has to be discovered by conjecture resting upon the merely internal evidence of the volume itself: it has come down to us by tradition from a remote, yet properly historical, period as the work of Isaiah ; and though in one sense it may be said that the evidence supplied by such a tradition is very inconclusive, still it must be remembered that it is the only kind of evidence which we have of the authorship of almost any other ancient, or even modern, book ; and that in all such cases we justly hold that the declared author is the real one until the contrary is proved, and that the burden of proof lies with him who questions this received authorship. If we proceeded on the contrary assumption we should be involved in a hopeless scepticism which

Ilytus and his Age, ii. 228, 239. M. de Bunsen did not, however, make my application of his maxims.

would make all history impossible. And here therefore the question we have to ask ourselves is not whether we can discover, or imagine, an author of these prophecies against Babylon, but whether we can understand and realize them as intelligible writings of the man Isaiah.

First, then, as to the supposed historical allusions to the times of the Captivity :—The traditional and orthodox* interpretation of the chapters before us—and to these I here confine myself—is, that they are a specific prediction of the taking of Babylon by the Medes and Persians about two hundred years after the words were uttered by Isaiah; and it is confidently added that the historical events are anticipated with such accuracy of detail as can only be explained by miracle. The rationalists admit the facts of these precise historical details, but maintain that they prove, not a miracle but that the real date of the prophecy is contemporary with the events. Whereas the thoughtful reader who examines the text as it is in itself, and not through the medium of traditions and conjectures, will, I am bold to say, find no such specific predictions and historical details. And this is the real issue he has to try: whether the title of Isaiah to this prophecy can be maintained by the method of ordinary historical criticism, and without claiming for him a miraculous power of prediction.

There is just the same profound insight into political principles, the same acquaintance with the general political relations of the foreign nations, and the same foresight of their consequences, which Isaiah exhibits in the prophecies admitted to be his; and there is the same absence of literal detail, or the same evidence that the detail is not historical but ideal, from its *not* corresponding precisely with actual events. The proofs of miraculous prediction exist only in the mind of the commentators, who have endeavoured to confirm the great truth that Isaiah is a

* Convenient as the terms, 'orthodox' and 'rationalist,' are for making a general statement, I should have feared to countenance, by the use of them, the base practice of pointing arguments with nicknames; but I find them employed as honourable titles—the one by Dr. Alexander, in the Introduction to his *Commentary*, p. xxxi.; and the other by M. de Bunsen, in *Hippolytus and his Age*, i. 164.

prophet, and filled with that 'spirit of wisdom and understanding' which he prized as being the 'spirit of Jehovah,' by trivial fancies of their own, which lower him towards the level of the muttering wizards whom he denounced. Grotius, indeed, saw better, and connected this, like the rest of Isaiah's prophecies, with contemporary events. And it would be hard to understand why the rationalists were not content to do the same, if we did not remember that when they first entered on the subject their conception of the human side of prophecy was so limited that they could only explain such passages as the vision in the sixth chapter, and the march of the Assyrian army in the tenth, by supposing them to be the one an apologue, and the other an historical statement; and that though their views have been gradually enlarging, they have still, like other commentators, what may be called a professional and unconscious prejudice in favour of the traditions handed down to them. This habit of accepting traditional comments as if they were a part of the text, is common with rationalist no less than orthodox writers, on every part of the Bible, and the uncritical conclusions of Jewish and ecclesiastical tradition have in the course of ages become so inveterate that they still retain their hold on minds which have abandoned the belief out of which they have grown. They form a large element of popular scepticism, no less than of popular orthodoxy as to what is assumed to be found in the Bible; and the rationalist commentator, no less than the orthodox, is but too often content with the position which the natural philosopher accepted before the days of Bacon, in which facts are assumed on popular report without actual observation, and then ingenious and elaborate explanations of them developed by the logic of the philosopher. And this habit has, if I mistake not, on this occasion, led to the taking for granted, first, the orthodox assumption, and then the rationalist explanation of it; though each is contrary to the facts of the text. If there are obscurities and difficulties, this is only what might be expected in a book of such antiquity, and with such small remains of contemporary history to throw light on its allusions; and in the present state of our knowledge, it

may be necessary to leave some of them unexplained, or to explain them conjecturally. But that they need such slashing criticism, or that its employment does not involve us in greater difficulties than it helps us out of, I am unable to see. If the text is corrupt, let it be emended ; but let us see what it is, and what it ought to be, each distinctly, and not blended together in a luminous mist of the higher criticism. And let us remember that what it ought to be is not to be ascertained by deciding how we, here in England in the nineteenth century, should have written it, or in what form it would be most easily intelligible to us ; for the probability is rather that such would not have been the precise form in which a Hebrew prophet would have written between two and three thousand years ago.

Whatever difficulty appears in verses 1, 2, 3, 4, of chapter xiv. would, I think, have been solved by anticipation, in accepting verses 10, 11, 12, of chapter xi., as the genuine and intelligible words of Isaiah ; only, that in the passage now before us, the captivity from which the people of Israel are to be brought back is said to be endured in Babylon, and at the hands of the king of Babylon ; whereas in the times of Isaiah the head of the Assyrian empire was usually called king of Assyria, and lived at Nineveh, and Babylon was a dependency, under his viceroy or vassal-king. Here, in fact, lies the real difficulty, to which all the others are but make-weights. To this then let us address ourselves, by examining the text as it is, and not as it ought to be.

The prophecy, as it is, then, consists of chap. xiii. and the first twenty-seven verses of chap. xiv., its termination being marked by the title of the next prophecy, as its commencement is by its own title, which states that it is by Isaiah the son of Amos ; while its position in the book indicates its date to be towards the end of the reign of Ahaz. In the last words (verse 25) of the prophecy, the impending destruction of the great Assyrian power is foretold in language corresponding with that in which Isaiah had constantly on previous occasions denounced the same heathen oppressor ; while the rest of the denunciation, though perfectly congruous with this its own close, differs

from those previous prophecies in calling the oppressor 'king of Babylon,' and foretelling the overthrow of that his capital, whereas, they call him 'king of Assyria,' and speak only of his army being destroyed. But Isaiah's authority for a contemporary historical fact, is as good as that of any other record of his times. If the latter contradict and disprove a statement purporting to be from him, we must balance the evidence and decide accordingly : but the mere absence of directly confirmatory statements would not throw doubt on the genuineness of an allusion by Isaiah to a fact probable in itself and uncontradicted, even though our resources for confirmation or contradiction were not so fragmentary as they are. And therefore the simplest and yet the most critical conclusion will be, that if Isaiah in one place calls the oppressor of Israel 'king of Assyria,'* and in another 'king of Babylon,' it was because he either called himself by both these titles, or at least was significantly pointed out to the prophet's own countrymen by the latter name ;† and that if Isaiah sometimes describes the Jews as carried captives into various lands, and sometimes as living in slavery at Babylon, it was because a large proportion of the captives taken in the time of Ahaz or of Hezekiah, had fallen into the hands of the luxurious and cruel inhabitants of that city. The only known fact in opposition to those necessarily involved in these expressions of Isaiah is, that Nineveh was the capital of Tiglath-Pileser and his successors. It has, indeed, been suggested‡ that about this time Pul, whom Berosus calls 'King of the Chaldæans,' was properly king of Babylon, and had, for

* The late Professor Maurice, writing to me in 1851, says—'The fact I am chiefly confident about in Isaiah is that the description in the 14th chapter exactly answers to Sennacherib, and not the least to Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar.'

The Dean of Westminster observes—*Lectures on the Jewish Church*, ii. 480, note—that my argument here 'seems to be very strong for supposing that by the 'King' in Isaiah xiv. 4, is meant the King of Assyria.'

† 'King of Delhi' is the name usually given by Indian historians and political writers in the last century—men living in the country and familiar with their subject—to the sovereign who still sat on the throne of Timour, though I believe he was never so called by the natives, but only 'the King.'

‡ By Professor Finzi, though with some reserve of his own judgment :—*Ricerche per lo studio dell' Antichità Assira di Felice Finzi*, p. 35. Pul is mentioned in 2 Kings xv. 19, and 1 Chron. v. 26 : but none of his Inscriptions have been found, and some Assyriologists identify him with Tiglath-Pileser.

the time, reduced Assyria to a province subject to himself as king of Babylon. But, in any case, there is no absolute contradiction or incompatibility of facts; it would be more correct to say that we have two statements which stand apart from each other, and in apparent opposition, and to which our meagre and fragmentary historical records supply no third statement which might reconcile the others, in the way in which a third statement so often does in all histories. Probable and approximate evidence, indeed, we have. Micah, the contemporary of Isaiah, makes Babylon, and not Nineveh, the city to which the daughter of Zion shall be led captive.* Shinar, or Babylonia, is one of the lands from which Isaiah foretells a redemption of the remnant of Israel and Judah.† Babylon was one of the cities from which inhabitants were supplied to the cities of Israel, and to which therefore the Israelites were deported, in the sixth year of Hezekiah.‡ Babylon, though at this time inferior to Nineveh inasmuch as the latter was the seat of the government, seems to have been the right arm of the Assyrian king, its palaces inhabited by his chief princes, and its vast population recruiting his armies, and consequently sharing largely in the treasures and the captives of the countries they helped to conquer. It had apparently an importance something like that of Pasargadæ after Cyrus had made Ekbatana his capital, or Ecbatana when Darius resided at Susa; of Delhi during the reigns of those Mogul emperors who lived at Agra, or of York in the days of our forefathers, and of Edinburgh and Dublin in our own time; § and it was, in truth, as its

* Micah iv. 10, which Gesenius refers to in his chronological table as proof that the Assyrian kings sent their prisoners to Babylon at this time.

† Chap. xi. 11, where the LXX. render the word by *Βαβυλωνία*, as they do by *γῆ Βαβυλώνης* in Zech. v. 11.

‡ 2 Kings xvii. 23, 24.

§ Compare, too, the following:—‘The preponderance of the Persians was at last complete; though the Medes always continued to be the second nation in the empire, after the Persians, properly so called; and by early Greek writers the great enemy in the East is often called ‘the Mede,’ as well as ‘the Persian.’ Ekbatana always continued to be one of the capital cities, and the usual summer residence of the kings of Persia; Susa on the Choaspes, on the Kissian plain farther southward, and east of the Tigris, being their winter abode.’—Grote’s *History of Greece*, iv. 251. ‘*Medising*, i. e. embracing the cause of the Persians.’—*Ibid.* v. 77.

earlier and later history shows, the more permanent of the two centres of the great Mesopotamian empires.* The traditions of its origin, of the nations that had sprung from it, and of the meaning of its name, gave it a special importance in the eyes of Isaiah and the people he addressed, as the type and embodiment of worldly arbitrary power, in contrast with the spiritual and law-governed kingdom of Jehovah: and, therefore, he might well name it (in a fashion of which we shall have other instances),† instead of Nineveh, which he never mentions, and of which his non-mention when he denounces so many other cities, would be a great puzzle, but for this explanation of it; for he must have known that the great king of Assyria had a city as well as an army. To use an illustration from the interpreters of the Cuneiform inscriptions, Babylon is a monogram or ideograph, employed by Isaiah to represent the capital of the Assyrian empire. And so the Euphrates, not the Tigris, is the river which is to overflow the land of Immanuel:‡ it was to Babylon, not to Nineveh, that Isaiah warned Hezekiah that his sons and wealth would be carried; Babylon, not Nineveh, supplies the forces which besiege Tyre;§ and to those who are content to take the text as it is, I may further quote the denunciations of Babylon in chapter xxi. and the latter half of the book. So adduced, they are facts supporting the fact before us: in the other mode of employing them, they are parts of an argument in a circle, in which the hypothesis as to the meaning or origin of those chapters sustains the like hypothesis as to this one; and the former in its turn does the like service for the latter.

And though it may still be premature to draw final conclusions from the Assyrian annals, yet the versions or summaries of the Assyriologists present correspondences with this, which I call Isaiah's own account, which it is difficult to conceive to be illusory, and not historical. They are to this effect:—Tiglath-Pileser calls himself by a title

* Brandis calls Sargon 'the ruler of the double kingdom of Nineveh and Babylon.' Lenormant and Finzi point out the great importance of Babylon during the Assyrian supremacy.—*Ricerche*, p. 23.

† Chapters xxv. 10, and xxxiv. 5, 6, where see farther.

‡ Isaiah vii. 20; viii. 7, 8.

§ Isaiah xxiii. 13.

equivalent to king of Babylon. Sargon styles himself 'the great king, the king of Assyria, and the lord paramount (or the high-priest) of Babylon,' as kings both before and after him did. This addition he seems to have taken in the twelfth year of his reign, when he inscribed the name of Babylon among his own titles, and that of the Babylonian Nebo in a conspicuous place in the series of gods to whom his palace was newly dedicated, both having been previously wanting. And at this date his annals say that he conquered and expelled Merodach-Baladan, who had been twelve years *de facto* king of Babylon, where Sargon thenceforth reigned in his own or his son's name, till near his death. And they afterwards relate—evidently as a matter of great importance—how he himself went to Babylon, to the sanctuary of Bel, and there 'took the hands' of the great lord, the august god Merodach: they recount in detail the great treasures of all kinds—gold, silver, ivory, precious stones, coloured stuffs, ebony, cypress, and cedar woods—which he carried thither; and also mention that he there received the homage and tribute of various kings. On, or just before, the death of Sargon, Merodach-Baladan, with the help of allies from Susiana or Elam, recovered Babylon; but was speedily driven out again by Sennacherib, who plundered Babylon, as well as all 'the fortresses of the Chaldæans,' carrying away gold, silver, and precious stones, gods, men and women, chariots, horses, camels, and mules, 'altogether a vast booty.' Sennacherib then appointed a viceroy (his brother according to Berossus), at Babylon: he had to reconquer it a second time from Merodach-Baladan, in his fourth year; when he appointed his son Assur-Nadin (Asordanius in Berossus) as his viceroy.*

Berossus relates a conquest of Babylon by the Medes and a dynasty of Chaldæan kings long before these times: he also calls Pul and Merodach-Baladan Chaldæans:† and

* Hincks, in *Transactions of the Irish Academy*, xxii. pt. 2, p. 40; pt. 4, p. 364, ff.; and in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, pp. 140, 353, 620. Rawlinson's *Outline*, pp. 19, 25, 26; *Commentary* (1850), p. 67. Oppert, *Inscriptions des Sargonides*, pp. 30, 41. Schrader, *Keilinschriften u. d. A. T.*, pp. 128, 220, 265.

† Bunsen's *Vet. Script. Fragmenta*, appended to *Aegyptens Stelle*, iii.

the constant appearance of the 'Chaldæans' in all the Cuneiform inscriptions has, I presume, ended the old doubts as to the historical existence of this race in the days of Isaiah, so that there can be no question that Babylon might without impropriety have been called 'the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,' by Isaiah, without his being conscious that his impassioned words would be still more applicable to a great Chaldæan dynasty afterwards to arise at Babylon than to the events he saw or anticipated in his own day.

So too of the fulfilment of the prophecy :—Grotius said, that if the Assyrian annals of Abydenus, and the Babylonian of Berosus were extant, we should find that between the times of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar the woes here denounced against Babylon did in effect come to pass through some invasion or invasions of the Medes, who about this date became independent of Assyria and very powerful under Deioces and his successor. And now the originals of those annals tell us that Merodach-Baladan wrested Babylon, once at least, from each of the kings Sargon and Sennacherib ; and that in both instances he did it by help of an army from Elam (or Susa), which nation is joined by Isaiah in chapter xxi. with the Medes as the destined conquerors of Babylon, while Media appears in juxta-position with Elam among the conquests of both Sargon and Sennacherib, the latter going to invade the Medes immediately after his second defeat of Merodach-Baladan, and indicating their power by the notice that none of his ancestors had received tribute from them as he had done.* Let us put these things together, and remember what a great and rich city Babylon was, and in what fashion it would be sacked by Merodach-Baladan, and his 'Susianian allies : ' let us consider that a great part of the same inhabitants who suffered on these occasions because they were the subjects of the great king, would be treated but little better when he found them with their allegiance transferred to his rival : and then we shall be able to judge what farther information we require,

* Rawlinson, *Outline*, pp. 18, 19, 20, 25 ; and *Commentary*, p. 61 ; Hincks, in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, pp. 140, 142, 145 ; Oppert, *Inscriptions*, pp. 28, 46, 49 ; Schrader, *Keilinschriften*, pp. 220, 225, 264.

in order to decide whether it is impossible that Isaiah could have written the words before us. If Sir Henry Rawlinson's belief that Sargon was a usurper, who expelled the dynasty of Tiglath-Pileser by a military revolution, should be substantiated—either with or without Professor Finzi's suggestion as to Pul—this would have been of itself a striking fulfilment of Isaiah's denunciations, whether the literal Babylon, or only the empire which is symbolized to the Jew, were subverted on the occasion : and the position of the prophecy in the book would indicate its date to be in Tiglath-Pileser's reign. In any case, we need not limit ourselves so much as Grotius does : it is not necessary to assume that this prophecy was fulfilled more literally and definitely than many others of which we have the historical counterpart, and see that they were far from having such a literal fulfilment. It is improbable that Babylon was utterly destroyed by Sargon or his immediate successors ; but it is a fact that it was not so destroyed by Cyrus, but perished by a decay extending through centuries. In order to enter into the spirit of Hebrew prophecy and understand its meaning we must consider that the prophet is enunciating universal propositions, but that instead of employing generalizations and abstractions as we should now do, he takes Babylon, or Moab, or Edom, or Israel, in the concrete, and uses this concrete image as the diagram by which to illustrate his proposition. The diagram is sometimes more, sometimes less, accurately drawn, according to the knowledge or skill of the individual prophet ; but he who looks for the meaning and truth of the prophecy in the literal correspondence of some historical event, falls into the same kind of error as the schoolboy who tries to prove a proposition of Euclid by measuring the parts of the diagram, and cannot apprehend how the proposition itself is equally true, and equally important, whether the circles and lines are drawn with ruler and compasses, or by the most awkward hand.

Isaiah looked on the main fortress of that kingdom of Force, which it was the mission of his life to denounce, as the really impotent rival of the kingdom of Righteousness, though the instrument for punishing the nations, and

especially Jehovah's chosen nation, for their rebellions against his laws. He knew that numbers of his countrymen (of Israel and of Judah) were at that moment the slaves of the cruel and luxurious Babylonians, and he may have anticipated that still more of the like punishment would be inflicted on those who yet remained in their own land. But he was appointed to preach not only judgment, but pardon and release, to his people : and while he meditated upon the events of his times, and of the times before him, and studied them in the light of that vision which had revealed to him the LORD of hosts and the reality of his dominion, he saw,—not by miracle, but by that insight into the principles governing the rise and fall of empires, which was a higher and more spiritual gift of God to him than any such miraculous power could have been,—that the Assyrian dominion would be overthrown by the less degenerate and more warlike nations from the north who neither cared for gold nor spared children, and whom with his wonted concreteness of style he here specifies as the Medes, and in chapter xxi. as the Medes and Persians : he saw that this Babylon with all it symbolized would be utterly destroyed, and the Jewish nation completely freed from its bondage. He saw all this in its idea, and accordingly set it forth in all the greatness and absoluteness of the idea ; while he believed that he himself should see such an accomplishment of it as was suited to his own times, that the successor of Ahaz would reign in righteousness over a people delivered from the thralldom of Assyria and Babylon, and that Babylon would meanwhile be humbled to the dust. But only a small part of this idea could be possibly embodied in any single set of historical facts. Only in the course of ages could the whole idea be evolved : there was much more of it brought out in the days of Cyrus than in the time of Hezekiah ; but still the discovery was but partial, and the accomplishment had—nay has—still to go on. It is not necessary for me to add to the above notices of the Assyrian annals, an abstract and reconciliation of what remains to us of the history of Assyria and Babylon. In the commentators, the Assyriologists, and their original authorities, the student must

necessarily examine the subject at large, and for himself : my ambition is only to help him to remove some obstacles which, if I mistake not, stand in his way. And I would ask him to judge for himself, and without waiting for leave from any commentators, whether, taking the text as it is, and interpreting its historical allusions by the ordinary methods and rules of criticism, and availing himself of such information as the remaining historical records supply, the state of things, internal and external—ideas and facts—supposed in the present prophecy is, or is not, something to the effect above stated.

Then, as to the language, style, and spirit requiring us to give a later date to these chapters—to which I still confine myself for the present :—The question is not one of Hebrew scholarship, properly so called ; and though the scholar, thoroughly familiar with the original, has no doubt a sense trained to the perception of shades of difference of language which cannot be preserved in a translation, still it does not require a knowledge of Hebrew to enable the reader to put the case, and to judge what would be the possible results ; he can form a reasonable conclusion upon it, just as a lawyer can in an ecclesiastical or commercial inquiry, though he is neither a clergyman nor a merchant.

As to language, no Hebrew scholar would say that the undisputed prophecies of Isaiah are archaic in words and grammar in comparison with those now before us, so that the one may be distinguished from the other as the *Troilus* and *Cressida* of Chaucer can be distinguished from that of Shakspeare. At the utmost, the question on this point stands thus :—Gesenius and Hitzig each specify five words or usages in these chapters as proper to the period of the Captivity and not to that of Isaiah ; but only one of these is specified by both critics : Knobel gives a longer list, but it contains none of the instances of Gesenius, and only one of Hitzig's : and then Delitzsch, speaking with no less authority as a Hebrew scholar than any of these, says that these words or usages do not require the explanation of the later date but may have properly belonged to that of Isaiah ; and Mr. Cheyne, though himself holding to the later date, says that 'the argument from phraseology

is merely a subsidiary one.' We have before us the small remains of the literature of a nation whose habits of thought and therefore of writing, are removed from ours by the distance of 2,500 years, and of Asia from Europe, and of all the differences therein implied; the language became a dead language about 2,300 years ago; and the still remaining books, habitually used in religious worship, must have been liable to such modernizations as books in popular use do not escape, even in our days of printing. And the question is whether, under these circumstances, and with the very limited means of comparison which such, and such small, remains of the literature afford, it is possible for certain very learned Hebraists to pronounce that the short prophecy before us was written not 2,500, but 2,300 years ago; because, as they assert—what other eminent scholars deny—they find a few words or phrases belonging to the later period. There can be but one answer—that nothing is proved by such evidence.

Nor is the argument against the genuineness of this portion of the book from its style or spirit of more weight: even if the differences were far greater than they actually are, the argument would be fallacious, because it necessarily assumes that which it has to prove, and excludes the facts which go against it. If we assume that the standard of Shakspeare's style is to be found in the tragic scenes of *Lear* or *Hamlet* we can easily show that the comic scenes are interpolations, and that still less could he have written *Twelfth Night* or *Henry IV.*; and the like conclusions as to the genuineness or non-genuineness of all the other plays might be drawn from their intellectual differences or resemblances. But when we admit all these to have been in fact written by Shakspeare, then the differences of style and sentiment are seen to be but diverse expressions of one mind, and are understood accordingly. And how can any one assert—in the absence of all evidence of the fact—that Isaiah during a career of fifty years must have written so exclusively in one style, and with one habit of mind, that we are able to pronounce what prophecies are, and what are not, from his hand in a

volume wholly attributed to him by tradition? We know that even in this case of the plays of Shakspeare in our own living language, and little more than two hundred years old, we are guided far more by a 'W. S.' on the old title-page, and by other external helps, than by any internal criticism, in deciding on the genuineness of the text. If we had nothing but *à priori* reasoning to guide us as to the genuineness of these prophecies of Isaiah we could say no more than this:—'The lesson must be learnt, hard and painful though it be, that no imaginable reach of critical acumen will, of itself, enable us to discriminate fancy from reality, in the absence of a tolerable stock of

* The Canon of Ezra may not have so much witness to its trustworthiness as that of Thrasyllus; but the observations of Mr. Grote on the possibility of deciding on the genuineness of certain of Plato's Dialogues by their style and spirit may be applied so literally to the like question as to these prophecies of Isaiah that I venture to support myself by his great authority. He says—'I have reviewed the doctrines of several recent critics who discard this Canon [of Thrasyllus] as unworthy of trust, and who set up for themselves a type of what Plato *must have* been, derived from a certain number of items in the Canon—rejecting the remaining as unconformable to their hypothetical type The 'internal reasons' upon which they justify their rejection of various dialogues are only another phrase for expressing their own different theories respecting Plato as a philosopher and a writer. For my part, I decline to discard any item of the Thrasylllean Canon, upon such evidence as they produce: I think it a safer and more philosophical proceeding to accept the entire Canon, and to accommodate my general theory of Plato (in so far as I am able to form one) to each and all of its contents. Considering that Plato's period of philosophical composition extended over fifty years, and that the circumstances of his life are most imperfectly known to us—it is surely hazardous to limit the range of his varieties on the faith of a critical repugnance, not merely subjective and fallible, but of modern growth: to assume, as basis of reasoning, the admiration raised by a few of the finest dialogues—and then to argue that no composition inferior to this admired type, or unlike it in doctrine or handling, can possibly be the work of Plato.'—*Plato*, by George Grote, vol. i. ch. v. pp. 206, 207. And again—'While adhering; therefore, to the Canon of Thrasyllus I do not think myself obliged to make out that Plato is either like to himself or equal to himself, or consistent with himself throughout all the dialogues included therein, and throughout the period of fifty years during which these dialogues were composed. Plato is to be found in all and each of the dialogues, not in an imaginary type abstracted from some to the exclusion of the rest. The critics reverence so much this type of their own creation, that they insist on bringing out a result consistent with it, either by interpretation, specially contrived, or by repudiating what will not harmonize. Such sacrifice of the inherent diversity and separate individuality, of the dialogues to the maintenance of a supposed unity of type, style, or purpose, appears to me an error.'—*Ib.* p. 210. The marginal note to this last passage is—'Any true theory of Plato must recognize all his varieties, and must be based upon all the works of the Canon not upon some to the exclusion of the rest.'

If a conclusive negative could be proved from style, the question whether Francis was Junius would have been settled by Englishmen dealing with their own language in their own time.

evidence :'* but Isaiah's historical reality is not lost like Homer's, in the mist of ages ; he stands as completely within the historical period as Demosthenes or Cicero ; his name is on all the old, genuine title-pages, and only omitted in the modern, reconstructed ones ; and criticism has merely to decide the negative point, whether it is impossible that these passages in a book thus historically ascribed to Isaiah, can have been written by him. On the other hand, let me direct the reader's attention to the various passages in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah in which the resemblances are such as can only arise from one having quoted or imitated the other ; and ask him to consider whether the relation of original and copyist, which exists in the case of the prophecies in which it is admitted that Jeremiah holds the latter place, does appear to be reversed in the case of those in which, on the theory before us, he is assumed to be the original. For while I believe that no positive conclusion from such exercises of the 'higher criticism' are to be set against the external evidence of existing texts, it seems to me not unfair to ask what is the negative result of such an inquiry : namely, whether Jeremiah's prophecy against Moab has the appearance of a mere composition of thoughts and images, without the complete unity of the other prophecy, which is admitted to be the older, even by those who deny it to be by Isaiah ; and whether, on the contrary, Jeremiah's denunciation of Babylon† indicates the unity of an original work, while the various prophecies attributed to Isaiah on the same subject show signs of being derived from that source. There may be some weight too, in an argument from style in favour of unity of authorship—as when Vitringa, without suspecting that a doubt would ever be raised on the subject, says that he can recognize the style of Isaiah in

* Mr. Grote, on the Unity of the Iliad and Odyssey—*History of Greece*, ii. p. 171. And farther on (p. 217), he says, 'The point' [Homeric unity] 'is thus still under controversy among able scholars, and is probably destined to remain so : for, in truth, our means of knowledge are so limited, that no man can produce arguments sufficiently cogent to contend against opposing preconceptions ; and it creates a painful sentiment of diffidence, when we read the expressions of equal and absolute persuasion with which the two opposite conclusions have both been advanced.'

† Chapters i. li. Ewald's hypothetical date and authorship of these chapters is, of course, a reply to my argument so far.

every line of his writings—because this neither assumes anything, nor excludes anything except it be the possibilities of accidental resemblance or actual imitation. And while I repeat that the genuineness of the prophecy before us is to be maintained on the external and matter-of-fact ground that it is historically asserted and not critically disproved, it is impossible not to notice the many striking resemblances as to thought and imagery between this prophecy and those which no one now doubts to be by Isaiah. I shall refer to some of these parallels in my analysis of these chapters.

But while I ask the reader to weigh these arguments against the conclusion that Isaiah could not have written these chapters, I would advise him not to be too impatient to have the question settled in the present stage of our knowledge and critical skill : nor, when he has once acquainted himself with the doubts raised on the subject, to hope forthwith for ‘the sweet sleep that he had yesterday.’ He may, indeed, hope one day to find that true wisdom and understanding, in this as in all things, will keep their promise, and be ‘life to his soul,’ so that his ‘foot shall not stumble,’ and his ‘sleep shall be sweet :’ but the passage from child-like credence to manly insight is ever hard, and requires patience. He who, in his natural desire for certainty, hastily persuades himself that the arguments on this question are conclusive, will presently find a reaction in his mind which will make him more at a loss than before. He only who, after he has heard the debate on both sides retires to quiet and long meditation on it can hope to get any permanent result ; and he may be content meanwhile, if he can honestly believe that the genuineness of the prophecy has not been disproved, though brought into doubt. Let him take Chaucer’s advice :—

‘Fly from the press, and dwell with sothfastness [truth] :—
The wrestling of the world asketh a fall :—
But truth thee shall deliver, ’tis no drede.’

Some new facts may be found when the Assyrian Inscriptions take their settled place among historical documents : if not, we are making daily progress in the scientific

investigation of what Hebrew prophecy actually was, by the repeated examination of the subject in all directions, and by many workmen: and the answer to this question will finally be settled by a general agreement.

Let us now return to the text of this first of the series of 'Burdens,'—weighty and sustained denunciations against the various nations. I see no sufficient reason for departing from this the older interpretation of נִשְׂאָה, though modern translators seem to prefer that of 'oracle.' The root means 'to lift up,' whether the voice or a burden. If a reason be sought for the position of these prophecies in the general arrangement of the Book, it may be observed that they carry into greater detail the principles and general views of those which precede; so that with one or two exceptions of form, rather than of essence, all the nations summarily named in verses 10—15 of chapter xi. are now addressed in distinct prophecies.

A standard is set up on a bare mountain-top where it can be seen from far, and Jehovah is calling his armies to it (comp. v. 26; vii. 18; xi. 10).^{*} In the mountains to the north of Babylon is heard the hum of a great multitude, which proves to be the northern nations gathering to battle, mustered by the LORD of hosts himself, and the weapons of his indignation (comp. chap. x. 5), for laying waste the whole earth,—the world-wide empire.[†] The day of Jehovah is come, and all men's hearts and hands faint[‡] (comp. ii. 12; x. 18), every face is flushed or pallid with alarm and amazement. The day of Jehovah is come, and the lights of heaven are darkened (comp. v. 30), the haughtiness of the proud and terrible is laid low (comp. ii. 11; x. 12); the heavens and earth are shaken by the wrath of Jehovah (comp. ii. 21). In that populous and wealthy abode of luxurious and selfish civilization, the life of a man, his own, or that of the soldier whom at any

^{*} These, and the following parallels, are from the undisputed prophecies.

[†] Ctesias says of the king of Assyria ἡρχε της γης ἀπάσης. And the Roman empire was called οἰκουμένη, orbis terrarum.

[‡] 'Cecidere illis animique manusque.'

Ovid. *Met.* 7, 347.—(Knobel.)

'Sic mea perpetuis liquescunt pectora curis,
Ignibus admotis ut nova cera solet.'

Ovid. *ex Ponto.* i. 2, 57.—(Gesenius.)

price he would employ, shall become more precious than gold, because gold can no longer buy it. Babylon is defenceless, all her foreign auxiliaries are fled, or if anywhere they have made a stand against the enemy, they have been put to the sword. The Medes care not for gold,* but for blood, though it be the blood of boys and infants: and if they want gold, they need not take it as ransom, for it is already theirs as plunder: they shall kill and spoil to the uttermost. Babylon shall be as Sodom and Gomorrah (comp. i. 9; iii. 9): it shall be wasted and without inhabitant. The desolation shall be complete. Jehovah had once declared of his own vineyard that he would break down its wall, and lay it waste, and that strange sheep should feed there; but Babylon shall not be even a pasture-ground; the Arab wandering through Mesopotamia and seeking pasture for his flocks and plunder for himself, shall not stay nor let them stay here, but shall leave the palaces and the pavilions to the dances of the satyrs, and the cries of the owls and the hyenas.† It is said that at this very day the Bedouin or wandering Arab, has a superstitious fear of passing a single night on the site of Babylon, and that the natives of the country believe it to be inhabited by demons in the form of goats. There seems, indeed, to have been an ancient belief among the Jews themselves that demons took the form of goats—appeared as satyrs in fact.

The word which most versions and commentators agree with the LXX. in rendering ‘demons’ or ‘satyrs’ is used in Leviticus xvii. 7, and 2 Chronicles xi. 15, for demons which the Jews worshipped. It is the ordinary name for the domestic goat, the wild goat being *עִז*, but the former cannot be intended here, as it is said that no shepherds shall make their folds there. Some commentators suppose it to mean some kind of monkey in this place. The Egyptians worshipped both goats and mon-

* ‘Ye Medes and others who now hear me, I well know that you have not accompanied me in this expedition with a view of acquiring wealth.’—Speech of Cyrus to his Army, Xenoph. *Cyrop.* v.

† ‘And in their palaces
Where luxury late reign’d, sea-monsters whelp’d,
And stabled.’ *Paradise Lost*, ix. 750.

keys, and both would have been naturally supposed to be dancing satyrs. ‘Constellations,’ כְּסִילִים, in verse 10, is the plural of the word by which the Hebrews are believed to have meant the group of stars called ‘Orion’ by the Greeks, and ‘the Giant’ by the Arabs. כְּסִיל is so used in Job ix. 9 ; xxxviii. 31 ; Amos v. 8. Elsewhere it means ‘a fool,’ often involving the notion of impiety ; and the constellation so named is supposed to have been conceived under the figure of an impious giant, probably Nimrod, bound upon the sky (comp. Job xxxviii. 31). The use of the plural—‘the Orions’—in the passage before us to express ‘the greater constellations like Orion,’ corresponds with the like idiom in English in such cases.

Out of the destruction of Babylon shall come the deliverance of Israel : the whole captive people shall be called, as by a new election and choice of Jehovah, and restored to their own land, from their hard bondage ; and they shall bring their former masters back with them, to be in turn their servants (comp. x. 20 ; xi. 10—16). The prophet then puts into the mouth of the restored nation a song (comp. xii. 1) of which Lowth is generally thought not to speak with exaggeration when he calls it the finest of its kind extant in any language ; and as to which, those who distinguish the styles of different ages of Hebrew literature should explain, upon what known principles the strongly marked and gradual decline of literary power and taste between the times of Isaiah and Ezra could have exhibited such a revival as this ode shows. It is a song of triumph in the form of a dirge, and therefore involves an under-current of sarcasm or irony. The oppressor and his proud rage have ceased, Jehovah has broken the staff of the tyrant (comp. x. 24—27 ; xiv. 25), and the whole earth, even to the very fir-trees, is at rest, and breaks into singing.* Hell—the unseen world of gloom

* ‘All the earth is gay :

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity.’

Wordsworth, *Ode*.

‘Ipsi lætitia voces ad sidera jactant

Intonsi montes ; ipsæ jam carmina rupes,

Ipsa sonant arbusta.’

Virg. *Ecl.* v. 62.

to which the grave is the gate—is stirred to receive the new-comer with his pomp and the noise of his viols (comp. v. 12, 14), and the shadowy and giant forms of once famous kings rise from their thrones below to meet their brother, now become weak as they. Israel then seems to resume the speech, though the transition is indistinctly marked, and contrasts the ambition of him who would have ascended into heaven and to the heights of the heavenly hill, with his actual fate, brought down to hell and to the depths of its pit. The old explanation of ‘the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north,’ was, that it referred to Mount Sion and the Temple, and that the cloud (the original is in the singular) was the white cloud of God’s presence; the impious boast thus corresponding to that in chapter x. 11, ‘Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her images?’ The Hebrew word is that used habitually for the ‘assembly’ or ‘congregation’ of Israel, while the phrase ‘sides of the north’ is that which is employed in reference to Mount Sion in Psalm xlviii. 2; and though I am aware of another explanation of the latter passage, I cannot but think it more probably a known expression descriptive of Sion, and so used, both there and here. I see no anti-climax in such a reading; nor that there is any impropriety in the blending of the heathenish and the Jewish belief on the subject into one image. The modern interpretation, that the reference is to the assembly of the gods in some Meru-mountain in the northern, and therefore highest, realms of an eastern mythology, seems to me far-fetched and foreign to the Hebrew habits of thought: and I conclude that it must have been adopted by great authorities on the supposition that the local traditions which place Sion on the south of Jerusalem, must be preferred to those of the Talmud, which declare it to have been on the north:—as to which question, see below, on Isaiah xxii. One poetical image suggests or thrusts out another in rapid succession. The king of Babylon—who made the earth to tremble (comp.

* ‘Upon Mount Zion . . . for Zion was in the north of Jerusalem.’—Ibn Ezra, *Commentary on Isaiah*, xiv. 13, English Translation, p. 71.

ii. 21) who destroyed kingdoms and cities, and carried the inhabitants away (compare the description of the king of Assyria and his fall in chapter v. 5—27)—shall *not* share what just now seemed the low condition of the other monarchs but now presents itself as a glorious repose, when contrasted with his lot—falling by the sword, his body not embalmed but the food of worms, refused a royal sepulchre, and fortunate if he can get so much burial as to be thrown into a pit with the common slain, (comp. x. 4), which shall cover his carcase trodden under foot (comp. v. 25), and be his only grave-clothes. He shall be cut off from the main stem of his family and race like a worthless, nay, abominable branch (comp. x. 33). The word ‘branch’ is used here as elsewhere in a genealogical sense, and the words are a vehement anticipation of the thought below, ‘the seed of evildoers (comp. i. 4) shall not be named for ever;’ where the word ‘named’ or ‘renowned’ is the same as in the passage, ‘in Isaac shall thy name be called,’ and as in Ruth iv. 14, which latter compare with its context. Jehovah himself will take care to cut off the ‘name and the remnant,’ the direct heir and the collateral remainder-man, and the city, like its royal family, shall be exterminated. The thought is the converse of that in chapter iv. 2—6, and the correspondence may be noticed in the argument for authorship from style. The appropriateness of the image of pools of water is evident when we remember that Babylon lay in a low situation, where the land was only kept from the periodical inundations of the Euphrates by constant attention to the canals and ditches. If it were deserted by its inhabitants, it would inevitably become ‘pools of water’ in a short time:—as is now the case. The expression, ‘besom of destruction,’ finds a counterpart in the annals of Sargon, where he calls himself ‘the sweeper away of Samaria and of the whole of Beth-Omri.’

But the invasion of Judæa, not the subsequent deportation of its inhabitants (like that which had already begun in the northern tribes of the kingdom of Samaria), might seem the more pressing danger to Isaiah’s own countrymen at the time he wrote; therefore he winds up this far-

seeing denunciation of the ultimate fates of Babylon and Israel, with a declaration of Jehovah's purpose,—confirmed with an oath, and not to be disannulled,—to break the power of the Assyrians while they were still in his land, on the confines of which they were now hovering, if they had not already entered it ; and to free his people from the yoke of tribute and oppression, which they were already feeling the weight of. This is the purpose which Jehovah has purposed upon the whole earth, and which he will execute with a hand that none shall turn back. As these last four verses are held to be from the hand of Isaiah by those who deny to him the authorship of the previous part of the prophecy, it is worth while to notice their connection both with those passages (xiii. 1—13) which describe the destruction of the whole earth in this day of Jehovah, and with those (xiv. 3—6) which predict the deliverance of Israel from their hard bondage in which they work under the continual stroke of the oppressor.

CHAPTER X.

ISAIAH XIV. 28—32.—PHILISTIA.—ORIGIN OF THE PHILISTINES—THEIR EXTERMINATION COMMANDED BY MOSES.—LAW OF CONQUESTS AND EXTERMINATIONS.—BRITISH CONQUEST OF INDIA.—EVIL NOT ETERNAL.—PHILISTIA'S RELATIONS WITH JUDAH—WITH ASSYRIA.—SARGON AND SENNACHERIB IN PHILISTIA.

‘**I**N the year that king Ahaz died was this burden :’—namely, on Philistia. There is a turn of expression in this title such as an author himself would be likely to give, when arranging and editing his writings in a collected form ; and such as a patriot might use to express his feeling at the thought of the relief from national shame and suffering which the change from an Ahaz to a Hezekiah had effected. Like the opening of chapter vi., it is better referred to the time before, than after, the king’s death, as the context shows.

Philistia was the south-west coast of the land of Canaan, to the whole of which it afterwards gave its name in the Greek form of Palestine, and was nominally included in the tribe of Judah. It was originally inhabited by the Avites, who were expelled by the Caphtorim, a race of Egyptian origin, but supposed to have come immediately from Crete or Cyprus, and who, under the name of Philistines, continued as a distinct, and for the most part independent, nation, in spite of the efforts of Israel to subdue them. These Caphtorim are also called Cherethim, which latter would be the Hebrew mode of writing Cretans, and which is twice translated Κρητες by the LXX. ; whence it has been inferred that there is ground for a tradition which says that the Cretans took possession of this coast under Minos, who built Gaza, and called it Minoa. We may infer from Amos ix. 7 and Deut. ii. 23 (in which

latter verse translate Hazerim 'villages,' instead of leaving it a proper name), that this immigration of the Caphtorim must have taken place within the historical memory of the Jews, though at such a period that Abraham found them already settled, as Philistines. The supposition of Vitringa that the 'Cherethites and Pelethites,' were Cretan and Philistine bowmen, the body-guards of David, has been adopted by some of the most recent authorities on this subject: it derives probability from David's long sojourn in Philistia, and the attachment which Ittai the Gittite (of Gath) showed to his fortunes; and from the discovery from the Egyptian monuments that the kings of the xixth and xxth dynasties had in their service mercenaries of a maritime nation cognate with the Philistines, and of which the name—Shayretana—is said to be almost identical with the Hebrew Cherethim.*

The Philistines were among the nations whom Moses commanded the children of Israel to exterminate. We shall judge of this command according to our belief or disbelief that there is a morality and a criminal justice for nations as well as for individuals; but it would perhaps never have been so commonly impugned as it has been but for the no less common and far less moral defence, that the act commanded would have been mere wickedness in any other people, but that being commanded by God it was thus made lawful for the Jews. But as to the command itself, considered in relation to the historical time and circumstances in which it was given, and apart from such defences of it, I say that it was neither unrighteous nor unmerciful, and that it is not an exception to the universal law by which men are to govern themselves, but the announcement of the law which always has been and always will be applicable to all like cases,—whether a return of the Heracleids, a Spanish conquest of Mexico, a Saxon or a Norman invasion of England, or a Sir James Brooke's destruction of Borneo pirates. If the spread of civilization, knowledge, justice, virtue, religion, and what-

* 2 Sam. viii. 18; xv. 18—22; xx. 7; 1 Kings i. 38—44. And Winer's *Realwörterbuch*, and Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, under the several names above.

ever else distinguishes men from beasts, is a good and not an evil, then it is good for men to use all the means which are really necessary to effect that end, even though some of them be never so rough and unpleasing; and it is not less base in public than in private morals to shrink from the responsibility of ourselves doing that which we know it is good to have done. If a weak, effeminate, degenerate nation can be improved by subjection to a stronger, manlier, more virtuous nation, then it is not only the right but the duty of the latter to bring it into subjection, whenever the indications of God's providence, be they of peace or war, show that the time has come. And if the nation is not merely degenerate but hopelessly corrupt, then it is not only the right, but the duty of some worthier nation to destroy it, and rid the world of its abominations. The Gospel has given to us, in modern Christendom, means of reclaiming nations who would have been irreclaimable by any measures which Greeks or Romans, or even Jews could apply; and we are bound to act with corresponding gentleness and forbearance. But if we look at the actual condition and relations of the Israelites and the nations of Canaan in the time of Moses, we see that the Canaanites had reached the last stage of degeneracy when they made their very religion to consist in the practice of their characteristic crimes of unnatural cruelty or lust, and that wherever they were tolerated instead of exterminated by the Israelites the purer morals as well as faith of the Israelites soon fell under the pestilent contagion, and they not only followed their gods, but 'did after their abominations:' so that the event proved what Moses foresaw, that if the future nation of Israel was to fill that place in the world and the world's history which its 'right noble stock,' its *stirps generosa et historica*, already indicated it to be intended to fill, room must be made for it not merely in territory but in moral atmosphere, by a national execution such as we Christians still inflict on individual criminals of like magnitude. If Moses had counted the slow moral death of Israel a less evil than the physical extinction of races who had already destroyed their own human being, what would have been the condition of the world now, and

what the state of the world-wide contest between good and evil? If we examine the whole case in that impartial and thoughtful temper which alone becomes the student of history, we must, I think, come to the conclusion that these injunctions of Moses are really righteous; and worthy—if the creation of man at all was worthy—of the God of righteousness: and that their provisions for confining the destruction of life within the narrowest limits possible,* are in accordance with the recognized rules of warfare in the humanest ancient nations, and with much of the practice of even those of Christian Europe. In a word, I believe that if we can read them in the light of universal history, and history in their light, we shall see them to be what they claim to be,—a part of the revelation of God.

Here, as always, the Bible reveals to us the universal law of political society, in the special instance of the Hebrew nation. The claim of Abraham's descendants to the land of Canaan, because God had given it to him, is a claim essentially of the same kind as that of the Dorians to Sparta, or of the Normans to England. There was no more technical force in the first than in the others: they no less than it were divinely inspired and sanctioned: but the Hebrew grant and conquest, taken in connection with the whole previous and subsequent history of which they are a part, reveal God as the righteous Author and Upholder of political society, anticipating, preparing, and directing all the successive arrangements by which the end is to be effected; and thus they throw a direct light (for him who cares to have it) on all other national conquests and settlements, which these reflect back on it. The Jews were no doubt as bloody and rapacious in their manner of effecting their settlement in Palestine, as many other nations in like circumstances; but this does but make it clearer that we have to distinguish between the thing that had to be done because it was right and good to do it, and the imperfect human instruments who did it in a very imperfect manner. As soon as we once get this distinction between the eternal, wise, and good *law* of

* Deut. xx. 10—18.

national settlements, and the partial and defective realizations of it in time by men, we recover the old faith in the Bible as the revelation of God's mind ; and yet are freer than the freest sceptic from the strange, yet common, perversion of reverence into superstition which has made men so continually fall back on that (in truth, though not in intention) immoral and blasphemous defence of the Hebrew conquest, which pleads that it 'is but a wrong in God's own world, and 'he may quickly make it right.'* This doctrine has made many a man reject the Bible, when he has too hastily supposed that it did contain what he had been taught from childhood to be there, but what his own conscience told him was contrary to the immutable distinction of right and wrong. And it has developed that unhealthy and dishonest way of looking at history and politics by religious men, that atheistic separation between worldly and religious grounds of political action (as though the former, no less than the latter, were not good in its place) which we are all familiar with. Thus, every student of the history of the establishment of the British power in India knows that our merchants there were originally actuated by no ambitious designs, but by singularly limited desires for mere peaceful traffic ; and that they allowed the conquests of Clive in Bengal, as well as the earlier wars at Madras, with the greatest reluctance, and merely in order to defend themselves in the midst of the general anarchy into which the Mogul empire was dissolved : and yet religious writers really well acquainted with history have preferred to ignore the real current of events, and to assert that our possession of India cannot be justified on Christian grounds, and is no place for a Christian governor like Sir John Shore ; but that we have of course a right, on worldly grounds, to hold and govern what a worldly disregard of the principles of the Bible alone enabled us to get. Let us take the facts of the conquest as they really occurred ; and let us say that though the English traders had as little belief that God was

* 'Why the wrong is but a wrong i' the world ; and having the world for your labour, 'tis a wrong in your own world, and you might quickly make it right.'—*Othello*, iv. 3.

calling on them 'to go up and possess the land,' as they had ambitious inclination to do so; yet that because it was God's will to re-organize India under Christian laws and institutions, after those of Menu and of the Koran had done their work, he by his providence made the first steps of the conquest unavoidable, and so led us on to the subsequent position, in which an ambitious Hastings or Wellesley, no less than a justice-loving Cornwallis or a pious and philanthropic Shore were made to do their successive tasks:—and then we shall falsify neither the Bible nor history.

I leave the question of the origin of evil as insoluble as ever. I only assert that the harsh subjugation or extinction of degenerate and corrupt races has often been the only practical remedy known to men for the still greater evil of their continued existence, and may therefore be rightly accepted as God's command in the matter: yet that God would not have commanded it unless it had been essentially righteous, and that the explanation that God has a right to do wrong, though reproduced with all the pomp of the newest phrases of philosophy, is alike immoral and irrational. If the infliction of suffering is often an end—a hopeless end—where even the best men are the agents, it cannot be so with God. The doctrine that God's punishments are eternal, that is, ends and not means; and which can believe, with complacency, that God has made hell a permanent and important part of heaven, and consigned a large portion of the human race to it, with no higher kind of justice than imperfect men can devise, is an assertion that God is made in our image, is to 'change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man.' Such notions—very different when deliberately systematized, to what they are as held by a Luther who exclaims 'Nature says it is unjust, Grace says it is unjust, but Glory will prove it just,' and there leaves it in reverent humility—still hang about us, and we are afraid of rooting them up, lest we root up wheat with the tares. But they are ready to vanish. The growing faith that reformation, not destruction, is the end in man's dealings with the rebel against human law,

is but the refracted light which tells that a clearer, brighter, more Christian apprehension of God's character is dawning upon us. And instead of our continuing to fancy that we are bound to read the New Testament, by the dimmer light of the Old, and to limit the inspiration of the Apostle of the Gentiles in his amplest utterances, by the letter of a few of his sentences, interpreted (or rather misinterpreted) so literally as to be no more logical than moral, we shall find ourselves made free by the truth as it is in Christ; and then we shall no longer pass by, but shall give the importance and the meaning which St. Paul himself gives to, that 'revelation of the mystery of the grace of God in Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men,' and which Christians have so strangely refused for the most part to receive since it has been revealed to them. Then we shall understand that 'the *whole* family in heaven and earth' is named of God and of Christ; that the very meaning of the Gospel, the good news itself, is that, where sin has abounded grace shall *much more* abound, and reign (not unto death, but) unto eternal life. 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.'

The author of the Book of Judges, with the political insight of this nation of prophets, points out how the inability of the Israelites to drive out the Philistines (among other nations) was the consequence of their losing their faith in Jehovah their King, and with it their military as well as moral superiority; and how this evil was yet, by God's providence, made to promote its own cure, the oppressions of the heathens stimulating them both 'to learn war,' and to return from their idolatrous associations to the true faith.* The Philistines were very formidable enemies to Israel in the days of Samuel and of Saul. The strong kings, David, Solomon, and Jehoshaphat, kept them in subjection, but in the days of Jehoram they invaded

* Judges ii. 20, to iii. 4, which may be called the text to the whole book.

Judah.* Uzziah again repressed them, and crippled their power, dismantling their walled cities, and building fortresses of his own to command them;† and no doubt they continued tributary during the still vigorous government of his successor Jotham. But during the weak reign of Ahaz, they ‘invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah;’ and not only invaded, but settled themselves in them, and their neighbouring villages:‡ and to this state of things Isaiah addresses himself in this prophecy. And here as elsewhere we may notice the appropriateness of his language, indicating accurate knowledge and lively imagination: the words ‘gate’ and ‘city,’ and the threat that ‘famine’ shall be the chief, and the sword only the subordinate, instrument of their destruction, point to the strongholds which characterized the Philistian power; and the ‘feeding’ and ‘lying down’ of the defenceless Israelite alludes to the ‘low country’ which lay so open to its inroads. The rod of the taskmaster is Isaiah’s frequent image for the control of a dependent and tributary nation: all Philistia had rejoiced when the rod of David and of Uzziah fell broken from the hands of Ahaz, and expressed their joy by wasting or taking possession of their former master’s lands; but Isaiah warns them that the old root of Israel, which from the days of Samson§ had sent forth many a rod with a serpent’s life like the rod of Moses, would soon again produce a basilisk with its royal crest, its inevitable spring, and its mortal bite, to take vengeance on his enemies. The ‘first-born of the poor’ seems to be a Hebrew idiom for the ‘really, eminently, poor,’ like that of ‘Son of Man’ to express *the* man: so Job uses the ‘first-born of death’ for death itself, or a violent death; and the ‘sons of thunder’ are persons of a thundering disposition:—a phraseology apparently springing from the strong family feeling of the Hebrew. Or the prophet may mean that the first of the next generation, the children of the present depressed Israelites, shall be delivered from the

* 2 Sam. v. 17—25, xxi. 15; 2 Chron. xvii. 11, xxi. 16, 17.

† 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7.

‡ 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.

§ Samson was of the tribe of Dan: and this image of a serpent may have been suggested by the saying of Jacob—‘Dan shall be a serpent by the way.’ Genesis xlix. 17.

miseries which the Philistines are now inflicting on their fathers. The Philistines had latterly so overrun and plundered the country that there was neither food for the poor peasant and his family, nor safety for any who were too weak to protect themselves: but things shall soon be reversed; those roots of Philistia, the five cities with their five lords, shall be reduced by famine though their walls hold out, and then the sword shall smite those who would escape.

Thus far the prophet would seem to be predicting the recovery by Judah of its supremacy, in the expected event of the death of Ahaz, pointed to by the title: but then, either as though he doubted whether Judah itself would effect the conquest, or more probably with an abrupt turn to the thought of the Assyrian power which he could see was preparing to sweep over all the southern nations, and Philistia among them, with a violence far greater than any Judæan army could exert, he proceeds to say that they shall not only return to that subordination which Judah enforced when it could; but that their whole polity should be dissolved:—for why? ‘For there cometh from the north a smoke;’ and when that smoke,* that too intelligible cloud of dust, draws nearer, it will reveal that army of which the fame is already striking terror into all the nations of the earth, the army which ‘has no straggler in its ranks,’† and at the approach of which the strongest city may despair, and the councillors who sit in its gate change their wisest plans into lamentations. Then the Philistines

* ‘Ac simul Æneas fumantes pulvere campos
Prospexit longe, Laurentiaque agmina vidit.’

Virg. *Æn.* xi. 908.

‘First was seen dust, like a white cloud,’ as the army of the Great King came on against the younger Cyrus.—Grote’s *Greece*, ix. 58.

When the peril from Attila and his Huns was imminent, Amianus bishop of Orleans sent ‘a messenger to observe from the ramparts the face of the distant country . . . In his third report he mentioned a small cloud . . . at the extremity of the horizon. . . . It is the aid of God, exclaimed the bishop, . . . and the whole multitude repeated after him, It is the aid of God. The remote object became each moment larger . . . the Roman and Gothic banners were gradually perceived; and a favourable wind, blowing aside the dust, discovered in deep array the impatient squadrons of Ætius and Theodoric, who pressed forward to the relief of Orleans.’—Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxv.

† Compare the description in chapter v. ver. 26—30.

will send ambassadors to propose to Judah some scheme of alliance and combined defence against the common foe ; but Jehovah's chosen people will reply—as it was the one unvarying principle of Isaiah's policy that they ought to reply to all such propositions—that they will make no such alliance with heathens, but will put their trust in Jehovah ; and when the flood of invasion spreads over the land the defenceless inhabitants of the open country will take refuge in Zion, and there look to Jehovah to keep his own city. 'We tell our Lord God,' said Luther, 'that if he will have his Church, he must keep it himself, for we cannot do it ; and it is well for us that we cannot, else we should be the proudest asses under heaven.'

Putting the few facts in the Hebrew records with the ampler statements in the Assyrian annals, the subsequent history of Philistia, and in which this prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, stands thus :—Hezekiah made the Philistines once more tributary to Judah,* and not improbably entered into some arrangements with the Egyptians for opposing the southward progress of the Assyrians, by means of garrisons in the strong fortresses of Philistia. Sargon on the other hand, after the conquest of Damascus and Samaria, advanced to the west and south, and he thus narrates this campaign :—'I besieged, I took, the city of Samaria ; I made captive 27,280 men its inhabitants ; I seized fifty of their chariots, and ordered the rest to be taken ; I set my judges over them, and imposed on them the tribute of the previous king. Hanon, king of the city of Gaza, with Sebechus (Sab-i), sultan of Egypt, came to battle and combat against me at the city of Raphia (Ra-pi-hi) ; I put them to flight : Sebechus could not resist the attack of my servants ; he fled, and his footsteps were not seen. I took Hanon, king of the city of Gaza, by my hand. I fixed the tribute of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, of Samsia, queen of Arabia, of It Himar the Sabæan,—gold, frankincense, horses, camels.' Then, after an account of a campaign or campaigns in Syria and Armenia, the inscription goes on :—'Azuris, king of the city of Ashdod, hardened his heart against payment of

* 2 Kings xviii. 8.

tribute; he sent to the kings his neighbours messages hostile to Assyria. Therefore I prepared vengeance; I changed the government over the people of his district, I raised his brother Ahimiti in his place to the throne over them. The people of Syria revolted and refused his rule; they put over themselves Yamani, who was not the rightful possessor of the throne, and who knew not the manner of governing. In the wrath of my heart I divided not the force of my army, I reduced not my baggage, I went against the city of Ashdod with my warriors who separated themselves not from the tracks of the sandals of my feet. But Yamani heard from afar of the coming of my expedition, he fled beyond Egypt to the confines of Meroe: his footsteps were not seen. Ashdod, Gimtu-Ashdodin, I besieged. I took his gods, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his wealth, his family, his house, and the people of his land I treated as spoil. I again repaired those cities, and put in them the people of the lands which I had taken with my hand towards the rising sun: I governed them with men of Assyria, and they continued faithful. The king of Meroe, who, in * * * a desert place * * * Since ancient time, his fathers had not sent their ambassador to the kings my fathers to seek peace, and to acknowledge the might of Merodach. * * * But the terrors of the greatness of my majesty moved him, and fear turned him. He cast him (Yamani) into iron bonds, and chains of iron, and directed his steps towards Assyria, and came before me.* Sennacherib, on coming to the throne, found that the Philistian lords, like Hezekiah, were refusing to pay the tribute imposed on them by his predecessors: so, after visiting Tyre and Sidon for the like reason, he proceeded to Philistia, and of what he did there he gives the following account:—‘Sitka of Ascalon, who did not come to pay me homage, the gods of his

* *Grande Inscription du Palais de Khorsabad*, publiée et commentée par MM J. Oppert et J. Menant, Paris, 1863. I have translated the Latin version given with the cuneiform text. The asterisks mark mutilated and illegible parts of the Inscription. Sir Henry Rawlinson had given an account, with a partial version, of this Inscription, in his *Commentary on the Cuneiform Inscriptions*, 1850. The two versions of Dr. Schrader (*Die Keilinschriften*, pp. 258—261), and Prof. Finzi (*Ricerche*, p. 45), substantially agree with that which I have given.

house, and his treasures, his sons and his daughters, and his brothers of the house of his father, I seized and sent off to Assyria. I placed Sarluki, the son of Rukibti, over the people of Ascalon, and I imposed on him the regulated amount of tribute. In the course of my campaign, Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Benebarak, Azur, cities of Sitka which had refused to submit to my authority, I took and plundered. The nobles and the people of Ekron, who had put Padi, their king, and my Assyrian vassal, in irons, and delivered him to Hezekiah of Judæa with hostile intentions, under cover of night, their hearts feared. The kings of Egypt had called in the archers, chariots, and horses of the king of Miruhka [Meroë, or Æthiopia], of which the numbers could not be counted. In the neighbourhood of the city of Altaku I joined battle with them. Trusting in Asur, my lord, I fought with them, I overcame them. The charioteers and sons of the king of Egypt, with the charioteers of the king of "Meroë," I took alive in the fight with my hand. I took the cities of Altaku and Timnath, and carried away the captives. I went against the city of Ekron, I slew the chiefs of the people who had rebelled : I impaled their bodies on stakes round the walls of the city. I carried into captivity the people of the city who had committed wrong or violence. I granted pardon to the rest of the inhabitants who had taken no part in the insurrection, nor done anything worthy of condemnation. Their king, Padi, I then brought back from the city of Jerusalem, and again placed him in authority over them, imposing on him the regulated tribute of the empire.' *

The learned translators of these annals differ chiefly as

* Rawlinson, *Outline*, p. 23 ; Hincks, in Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 143 ; Oppert, *Les Inscriptions des Sargonides*, pp. 44, 45 ; Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften*, pp. 186, 187. I have retained the earlier version of Sir H. Rawlinson, where it has not been materially changed by the later translators. The names Altaku and Timnath (Taam-nâ) are identified by Dr. Schrader (*Keilinschriften*, p. 77) with the Eltakeh and Thimnathoth of Joshua xix. 43, 44 (comp. Judges xiv. 1), which were among the Philistian cities allotted to the tribe of Dan, and which were therefore in the country which was the seat of war in this campaign of Sennacherib. Prof. Finzi (*Ricerche*, p. 386) gives the same identification of 'Tamnâ,' but supposes 'Altaqu' to represent the Eltekon of Joshua xv. 59 ; but Dr. Schrader gives strong reasons for preferring his own conclusion.

to details of no great importance: the general purport of their versions is the same; and if it be in the main correct, we may infer that the Egyptian alliance which Isaiah more specifically denounces hereafter was a part of a great political system of combined defence against Assyria; and then the similarity of the prophet's 'burdens' of Tyre and Moab to this of Philistia, confirms the probability that they too were members of the system, and throws a new light on Isaiah's purpose in making them the subjects of his discourse. We shall have to return to this alliance: here we may observe, that on this, as on so many other occasions, Isaiah foretells what ought to have been, and would have been, if it had not been prevented by want of faith in the Jewish government and people: he gives the answer which Hezekiah ought to have returned to the proposals of the Philistines: Sennacherib's annals tell us what answer the Jewish king did return, and how he was punished for it. Yet in the end God's plan and purpose, and his prophet's declaration of it were fulfilled: after they had tried to save themselves by their own policy, they did in the end, and in their extremity, turn to Jehovah to save them.

CHAPTER XI.

ISAIAH XV., XVI.—MOAB.—PROBABLY REDUCED BY SHALMANESER.—HISTORY OF MOAB—PICTURE OF ITS OVERTHROW.—TRIBUTE OF LAMBS DUE TO JUDAH. — FRIENDSHIP WITH JUDAH ADVISED. — MODERN DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ANIMAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE.—CORPORATE UNITY OF A STATE.

‘THE Burden of Moab.’—The place and the contents of this prophecy agree to indicate that it was delivered about the same time with the preceding; that is, in the last year of Ahaz, or the first of Hezekiah. The only historical reference to its fulfilment, which it threatens shall certainly be within three years from its delivery, is what we may consider to lie in Sennacherib’s mention of Kemosh-natbi of Moab, as one of the kings who repaired to his presence in the neighbourhood of the city of Tyre, with their accustomed tribute, in his third campaign.* But Moab can hardly have escaped the lot of all the neighbouring nations at this period of Assyrian conquest: and at no time was it more likely to be invaded than when Shalmaneser came up to besiege Samaria, in the third year of Hezekiah. The adoption of this prophecy by Jeremiah, shows that Moab, like other nations threatened by Isaiah, was again a flourishing people, and destined to suffer a renewed and severer fulfilment of the judgment originally pronounced.

The Moabites, a collateral tribe of the Hebrew race, had (before the departure of the latter from Egypt) established themselves in a territory from which they had driven out the Emims, and which extended from Zoar at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, to the river Jabbok on the north, and was bounded on the west by that sea and the

* Oppert, *Inscriptions*, p. 44, and Rawlinson, *Outline*, p. 22. Mr. George Smith reads the name as I have given it above.—*Notices of Palestine in the Cuneiform Inscriptions*, in *Palestine Exploration Fund Statement* for Oct. 1872.

Jordan, and on the east by the desert. But not many years before the children of Israel took possession of the land of Canaan, Sihon king of the Amorites, who then dwelt in Canaan, passed the Jordan, conquered all that part of Moab which lies between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon, left the Moabites only the tract south of the latter river, and made Heshbon his capital.

Moses had commanded the Israelites to respect the territory and the rights of Moab, as he had those of Edom and Ammon, and he would have passed peaceably through the kingdom of Sihon, but the latter refused to permit him, and gave him battle; and, on his defeat, Moses took possession of his newly acquired territory, and divided it between Reuben and Gad. Balak, king of Moab, took alarm, though unmolested; but after an alliance with the Midianites, and taking the prophet Balaam to their counsels, they thought it more politic to conciliate than to attack the strangers. And from this time the relations of the two peoples were sometimes hostile, sometimes friendly. In the days of the Judges, Eglon, king of Moab, made Israel tributary for eighteen years, but he was killed by Ehud, and the yoke broken. A time of peace then appears to have succeeded, in which we see, from the story of Ruth, that not merely friendly intercourse, but even intermarriage took place. Saul made war on the Moabites, and David reduced them to be tributaries. After the separation of the Ten Tribes from Judah, Moab continued a province of the former kingdom, and the tribute paid to Ahab was 'a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool,' for 'Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-master.' At the death of Ahab the Moabites rebelled* against his son Joram, who, with the aid of Judah and Edom, defeated the rebels in a great battle, and laid waste their land: but they do not seem to have been reduced to permanent submission, as

* The Inscription on the lately-discovered Moabite stone appears to be a contemporary record of King Mesa himself, of his rebellion against Israel and his subsequent restoration of the fortresses of the country. It has been supposed that it was engraved on an altar erected to Chemosh, to whose anger Mesa attributes the former conquest of Moab, and the recovery of its independence to his favour. A full and very interesting account of its discovery, and destruction, as well as of its contents, will be found in Wilson and Warren's *Recovery of Jerusalem*, pp. 496, ff.

they were shortly able to make war on Jehoshaphat in revenge for his late alliance against them. About fifty years after, we find marauding 'bands of the Moabites' entering the territory of Ephraim, as though they were either independent or in revolt. And after a further silence of history for more than a century, we here find Moab not only a flourishing and independent kingdom, but in unquestioned possession of the ancient lands and cities of Reuben and Gad. Moab had, as Jeremiah complains of Ammon, become 'the heir of Israel,'* and the absence of even so much of protest from this prophecy of Isaiah, seems to indicate that the possession was, partly at least, held by old prescriptive right. Some of the cities, though granted by Moses to Reuben and Gad, may have continued in the hands of their former possessors, as those of Philistia did; and the Moabite power and territory would probably extend itself as the strength and population of the kingdom of Ephraim decayed, till the Assyrian deportations of the latter, of which more than one had already occurred, ended any remaining disputes.

The national worship of Moab was that of the god, or gods, Chemosh and Baal-Peor. Chemosh is conjectured by Gesenius to mean the Subduer, while Baal is Lord, or Master; and Baal-Peor is explained to mean Baal of Mount Peor, the mount to which Balak took Balaam to curse Israel, and which was, perhaps, the chief place of their worship. The national character and national worship were, no doubt, as intimately related as they are found to be in all nations which have left sufficient means of information on the subject. And we see from the notices of Moab in the histories of Israel and the prophecies, that Moab was a fierce and warlike people, rich, and comparatively civilized; while there is something in the religious tone of king Mesa's Inscription not unlike that of the Hebrews themselves.†

The vision of the overthrow of Moab rises before the prophet. Ar-Moab, or Rabbath-Moab—'Moab's City,'—of which the ruins, under the name of Mab, or Erabba,

* Jer. xlix. 1.

† The article *Moab* in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* leaves nothing unsaid.

may still be seen on the south of the Arnon, is cut off by an attack unexpected as the thief in the night : so is Kir—'Moab's Wall,' or 'Fortress,'—which, a castle on a rocky hill, a few miles south-east of Ar, still tells the traveller of its importance, by the remains of its church and mosque, and by the name of Karrak-Moba, which it gives to its no longer resident bishop, and to the whole tract which was once Moab. He sees the people with heads and beards shaven in token of grief, girt with sackcloth, dissolved in tears, and uttering loud lamentations ; going up to the high places of their gods at Bajith and at Dibon, to entreat for aid ; wandering through the streets ; collecting in the market-places, or open squares near the gate, where the last news of the enemy, or of the plans of the government, might be heard ; or retiring to their house-tops to supplicate their household gods, or mourn in private over the fate of their families and themselves.* Heshbon, the royal city of the Amorites ; bestowed on Reuben and on Gad and his Levites at different times ; famous for its fish-pools, and, like the neighbouring Elealeh, still to be found by name in the highlands of Gilead opposite Jericho ; makes its cry of despair—a cry which even the warriors of Moab raise instead of their battle-shout—heard afar, for men's very souls are terror-stricken. The prophet may have little love for Moab, but his heart cannot but be touched by such utter woe ; for he sees the whole people flying from their houses, towards Zoar on their southern frontier, as their father Lot had once fled to the same city in his extremity. They fly as the heifer in her prime and when her voice is deepest flies from the first attempt to bring

* Vitringa quotes Justin's description of Athens (lib. v. c. 7), when news had arrived of the loss of Conon and his army : 'Quæ cuncta cum Athenis nunciata essent, omnes relictis domibus per urbem discurrere pavidi ; alius alium sciscitari ; auctorem nuncii requirere ; non pueros imprudentia ; non senes debilitas ; non mulieres sexûs imbecillitas domi tenet : adeo ad omnem ætatem tanti mali sensus penetraverat. In foro deinde cœunt, atque ibi perpeti nocte fortunam publicam questibus iterant. Alii fratres, filios, aut patres, DEPLENT,' &c. &c. And of Carthage (lib. xix. c. 2), after the destruction of Imilco's army in Sicily : 'Quæ res cum nunciata Carthaginî esset, moesta civitas fuit ; omnia ULULATIBUS, non secus ac si urbs ipsa capta esset. PERSONABANT Cuncti deinde AD PORTUM congregantur,' &c. Compare, too, the descriptions of Syracuse expecting the Carthaginians ; and of the population of Himera, Agrigentum, and Gela, flying from them.—Grote's *History of Greece*, x. 599.

her under the yoke : he sees them weeping as they go up the hill of Luhith, on their way to Zoar, and he hears their cries of despair as they descend again by the road of Horonaim. Then half-retaining, half-changing the image of the heifer, the prophet explains the cause of their flight to be, that the waters and consequently the green fields of Nimrim, or Nimra, near Heshbon which, because it had the rare blessing of water, was a fertile valley, and a coveted pasture for cattle,* 'are desolate,'—struck by drought, whether conceived as a poetical image or as the actual result of the cutting of water-courses in war. The invader is upon them, and their only remaining chance is to cross the 'Brook of Willows' (now called Wady-el-Ahsa, and forming now, as then, the boundary of the land), carrying with them what they can of the wealth which long peace had enabled them to accumulate. The cry and the wailing spread even beyond the frontiers of Moab, and shall be heard at the 'Well of Princes,' where Israel once found water in the desert, and in their joy sang that song, 'Spring, O Well,' destined to endure with their own name for ever. The channel of Dimon shall run blood instead of water : and if any escape the sword, upon them Jehovah will bring the lion :—a threat which may indicate still repeated devastations by the invaders, or it may—in better harmony with the context—be understood literally, as it seems to point to some calamity to follow after these invaders have done their worst. We have accounts of the actual appearance of lions on the west bank of the Jordan, the thickets of which they seem to have frequented. As long as national order and prosperity continued, the wild beasts would be kept under, and driven back to their woods and mountains ; but in times of anarchy, when the population was diminished, the fields not fenced in, the cattle not watched, and the roads not kept in constant use by traffic, they would prowl in quest of prey through the land.

The expression of 'sending the lamb' is clearly explained by the account already referred to, of the mode in which the tribute of Moab was paid during its dependence on Israel. A more difficult question arises from the

* Numbers xxxii. 3, 36 ; Josh. xiii. 27.

mention of Sela—‘the Rock’—which it seems most straightforward to take here, as in 2 Kings xiv. 7, to be Petra, the chief city of Edom : and we must then suppose that it had fallen into the power of Moab, perhaps at the time when this nation made itself obnoxious to the denunciation of Amos, Isaiah’s elder contemporary, for some savage outrage on Edom ;* or that Sela is here mentioned, not as in possession of Moab, but to indicate that the required flocks would be collected most conveniently in the pasture grounds near that city, whether they already belonged to the Moabites, or were to be purchased from Edom. The ‘wildernesses’ and ‘deserts’ of the Bible answer (with due allowance for the difference of climate and consequent vegetation) to what we call moors or commons, uninhabited, but fit for pasture. The wilderness here referred to was probably the tract between Petra and Judæa, which Strabo calls *ἐρημος*, and Jerome *desertum* ; and Sela may have been the head-station of the shepherds who frequented these plains with their vast flocks, and where they found protection and water such as Uzziah is said to have provided for his flocks by making ‘towers and wells in the desert.’

Isaiah, after declaring the woes that are coming on the people of Moab, calls them to submit themselves again to their rightful lord-paramount, by sending the tribute as in former times. The image of the Daughter of Zion sitting in royal dignity suggests that of the daughters of Moab in flight ; and this the two images, of the undignified peasant or female slave wading through a river, and of young birds losing their nest and struggling at the risk of their lives.† And then the abrupt turn of expression seems to indicate a sudden consciousness of the apparent impropriety of a Jew in the unhappy reign of Ahaz—when his own country was in the depths of humiliation and distress—thus addressing the haughty Moab which was still in all its prosperity and pride, and at the very moment a place of refuge for the Israelites who were flying from their own land to avoid military inroads on every side, and also the extortion of tribute, which, from the way in which

* Amos ii. 1.

† Compare chap. xlvii. 1—9.

Isaiah constantly speaks of it, would seem to have been collected by the Assyrians themselves: and therefore, while repeating the prediction which he had lately made to the Philistines, that the throne of David would shortly be established in its former power, and giving this as the reason why Moab had better return to his allegiance, the prophet makes it also a reason why meanwhile the Hebrew fugitives should be treated with less pride and wrath.

The old way of understanding this as the address of Isaiah to Moab seems to me to give a more coherent sense than the modern supposition, that it is the petition of Moab which accompanies the lambs.

But, the prophet adds, such arguments will be in vain; we know his proud and cruel character too well. This insolence is spoken of as the national character of Moab and Ammon by Jeremiah (xlviii. 27—30) and Zephaniah (ii. 8—10), and we find Sanballat of Horonaim (in Moab), and Tobiah the Ammonite, mocking, in the old spirit of their people, the builders of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. But his pride shall not prevail; his boasting will prove a lie in the end. The land of Moab was famous then, as it is still, for its pastures and its vineyards; and in renewing his warning of the destruction at hand, Isaiah now takes his images from the latter, as before from the former, feature of the country. He sees 'Heshbon and Elealeh, and the flowery dale of Sibmah clad with vines,' wasted by the ruthless invaders, who break down those plants so famous for their choice fruit, and so luxuriant in their growth, that nature and man combined to carry them beyond the limits of the desert and over the sea. This 'sea' may either be the Dead Sea, or, as Jeremiah understands it, a lake at Jazer, though none has been found there now. The prophet's sympathy is so excited that he weeps for Sibmah, as Jazer and its people themselves may weep; and if their watercourses are cut off, he will supply the loss with his tears. The wheat and barley were the spring-harvest; but the joy of the summer-harvest, when the fruits, the olives and the grapes, were gathered in to repay the toils of the year, would be the greater: but the singing and the shouting in the vineyard and at the wine-

press are not now heard ; their vintage-shout has ceased, for other gatherers and treaders are come, and the battle-shout is heard in its stead.

Kir-hareseth and Kir-haresh are understood to be other names for Kir-Moab, mentioned above. Sibmah was in the neighbourhood of Heshbon. The expression 'my bowels shall sound like a harp for Moab,' employs a favourite image of the Hebrew poets. The ancients would not have understood the feeling which makes such allusions repulsive to modern taste, while we acknowledge their appropriateness and force. We shrink from such undisguised mention, in words, of the more grossly animal functions, just as we do from the unrestrained utterance of such 'howlings' as are attributed to Moab in the chapters before us, and which would not have seemed degrading to a Greek or Roman any more than to a Hebrew. And the best explanation is that which has been given of the latter fact by the author of '*Guesses at Truth*;' namely, that Christianity has so clearly established the distinction between flesh and spirit, that every man, woman, and child can feel it to be disgraceful that our animal nature should, even under the most trying circumstances, have its own way, and cease to be under the authority of our human will. Self-possession and self-control are no longer virtues to be exhibited only by great men on great occasions, but to be the ordinary habit of all of us at all times.

When Moab finds that he is wearying himself to no purpose by his sacrifices on the high places, he shall try whether prayers in his temples will be more effectual ; but both shall be in vain. These judgments have been hanging over the head of Moab from of old : but now the time of their accomplishment is near ; it shall be within three years, to be understood literally and precisely, as they would be in the hiring a servant for such a term. There is no occasion, though no objection (except what lies against all unnecessary conjectures), to suppose that verses 13 and 14 are a postscript added to the prophecy, itself of earlier date : it is just as easy to understand them as parts of one whole.

We may notice here, though the observation applies equally to all like occasions, that Moab is a Person in the eyes of the prophet; for this much better expresses the case than to speak of a personification. This sense of the corporate unity of a nation was much stronger among the ancients, as it was in the middle ages, than anything we feel now in our political communities, which are so much larger, and with such much more complicated interests than those of former times. Our old legal forms, by which an association of men is 'incorporated,' with perpetual succession, power to sue and be sued, and to use a common seal, as though a single person; as well as those which erect individual personages, such as the sovereign, the bishop, the parson, and so on, into 'corporations sole,' with the legal powers of a corporate body; are illustrations of the mediæval feeling. If we have lost something, we have also gained something by the change; for it has been effected in a great degree by a growth and expansion of patriotism towards philanthropy, if it must also in some respects be referred to a depression of the patriotic by the selfish temper.*

Jeremiah has recast component parts of this prophecy in a new form; as he has the prophecies against Babylon; and in each case with the same indications that he is not the original author.

Many modern commentators hold this 'Burden of Moab' to be by an older prophet than Isaiah, to whom they attribute only the two last verses (xvi. 13, 14): their reasons, from supposed peculiarities of style and sentiment, are such as I have already argued to be too merely hypothetical for historical criticism.

* M. de Bunsen gives an interesting statement of the philosophic grounds—of the essentially real and rational basis—of the personality of societies as well as individuals; and of its adequate realization in the Christian Church.—*Hippolytus and his Age*, ii. 32—52, 1st Edition. Mr. Freeman, too, has treated the subject in his Essay on Public and Private Morality, in the *Fortnightly Review* for April, 1873.

CHAPTER XII.

ISAIAH XVII., XVIII.—DAMASCUS, EPHRAIM, AND ETHIOPIA.—PROBABLE DATE AND UNITY OF THIS PROPHECY.—THE RUSH OF NATIONS.—THE GENERAL PANIC.—WORLDLY ALLIANCES.—GOD'S DELIVERANCE.—NOTION THAT THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB'S ARMY IS A MYTH—NOT WELL FOUNDED.

THE old division between chapters xvii. and xviii. (as in the Authorized Version) may indicate the opinion that a distinct prophecy begins with the latter chapter, though it might remain a question whether verses 12, 13, and 14 of the former one were a fragment detached from both, or the conclusion of that entitled 'The Burden of Damascus,' but which relates still more to Ephraim, the ally of Damascus at the beginning of the reign of Ahaz. The modern opinion is in favour of considering that the former prophecy ends with verse 11 of chapter xvii. ; and that its date is the same as that of chapter viii.—ix, 7, namely, the year in which the northern tribes of Israel were carried away by Assyria, and which deportation is supposed to have taken place the year before that of the inhabitants of Damascus. And the remaining verses of chapter xvii. are taken as the beginning of a new prophecy ending with the end of chapter xviii., from which they should not have been divided ; while its date is referred to the same period as that of chapter xx., when the Assyrians were actually beginning to overflow the borders of Judah, and the ministers and people of Hezekiah were looking to Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia and Egypt, for help.

Yet there is some force in the argument that in this part of the book, where a series of titles seems to define the beginning and end of each portion, we should take the two chapters as one whole ; that the under-current of thought common to verses 11 and 14 of chapter xvii., and

verse 5 of chapter xviii., and the יְהוָה with which verse 12 of chapter xvii., and verse 1 of chapter xviii. begins, are in favour of the continuity of the text ; and that there is also a unity of idea pervading this whole, and corresponding with that which we have noticed running through chapters vii., viii., ix., x., xi., xii., and giving them greatly the character of a continuous whole, though that whole may be made up of portions originally separate. The train of ideas which unites those chapters is, that Judah need not fear the hostile alliance of Syria and Ephraim against her, nor yet seek for help from Assyria or Egypt, if only she will trust in her own LORD, and true Protector ; that since she will not trust in him, she shall be herself overwhelmed by the heathen powers she calls in, and thus punished for her own loss of faith, and propensity to idols, even though these powers deliver her from her immediate alarm ; but that at the last a righteous king shall reign in Sion over the restored remnant of both Judah and Ephraim, and all the nations of the earth shall acknowledge his dominion. And a similar thread of thought may be found running through the two chapters now before us,—which open with the destruction of Damascus and Israel ; refer the calamities of the latter to his abandonment of his true LORD, who shall yet preserve a remnant of his people ; and predict the destruction of the Assyrian as soon as he has fulfilled his office of the scourge of God, and the recognition of the Name of the LORD of hosts by Egypt and Ethiopia. There is an essential resemblance between the two, with a difference in the proportions of their parts : Damascus and Ephraim become less prominent in the latter than the former, while the slight mention of Egypt in verse 18 of chapter vii., apparently indicating that the politicians of the day were just thinking of the possibility of an alliance with that power, is replaced by a reference to the altered state of things when that alliance was actively promoted by the government of Hezekiah, as their only support against Assyria. It appears from Sargon's Inscription at Khorsabad—from which I have already given the detailed account*—that after taking Samaria

he went to Philistia, and there gained a victory over Sevechus, king of Egypt, on his advancing to the support of the Philistine tributaries of Assyria, who were in rebellion, and had allied themselves with Egypt; and though we shall see that the events to which chapter xx. relates may belong to a later date and another campaign than this, there is no reason why the Ethiopians should not have now sent an embassy to Judæa in anticipation of an advance of Sargon to the south: and then there will be no chronological difficulty in taking these two chapters (xvii. and xviii.) as one prophecy delivered about the time of Sargon's capture of Samaria.

Damascus, which is mentioned in the history of Abraham, and is still a flourishing city in western Asia, was the capital of one of the five principal states of Syria, and was therefore called Syria of Damascus. It was subjugated by David,* but successfully revolted against Solomon. Thenceforth it was commonly at war with Israel, so that a three years' peace in the reign of Ahab is recorded as a long one. With the alliance of its last king Rezin with Pekah, king of Israel, and its results, we are already familiar.

There are two Aroers mentioned on the east of Jordan, one near the Arnon, and the other to the north, and near the Ammonite city of Rabbah;† and the cities of Aroer here spoken of may be the cities and villages of Gad and Reuben in the district between the two Aroers, or more immediately about the northern one, which will connect them with the deportation of Tiglath-Pileser, referred to on former occasions.

The prophet threatens the two nations with a common destruction: the glory of Damascus shall be as the glory of Israel in the day in which the strength of the latter is wasted away with the emaciation of mortal disease, and his wealth is carried away as the whole crop of corn is carried away in harvest time. But then Isaiah substitutes an image not so strong: the gleaner follows the reaper of corn, and leaves nothing behind; but the most active

* 1 Kings xi. 23, 24, xxii. 1.

† Josh. xii. 2, xiii. 16—25; Numb. xxxii. 34.

shaking and beating of the olive-tree leaves a few berries on the uppermost boughs ; and such a remnant will be left of Israel, though the once strong cities of the nation will be reduced to the humblest, most defenceless condition. Such a remnant we know did, after the general deportation of the ten tribes, accept Hezekiah's invitation, and return to the right worship of Jehovah at Jerusalem, as they did again in the time of Josiah.* In that day the judgment on the nation, and the mercy shown to the penitent few, will alike bear witness against their past idolatries and forgetfulness of the God of their salvation. And then Isaiah, in his usual manner, blends with the previous image of the Assyrians reaping a harvest of cities and their inhabitants, the new one of the Israelites transplanting heathen gods into their worship, and reaping God's abandonment of their nation as the fruit ; while both images connect themselves in the mind with the thought of the actual wasting of fields and vineyards through the country, by the ruthless invaders.

On a former occasion Isaiah had said, 'Jehovah spake unto me, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Siloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son ; now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, the king of Assyria, and all his glory : and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks ; and he shall pass through Judah ; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck ; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.' And now he hears the sound of these mighty and many waters, while 'the nations rush like the rushing of many waters,' and 'make a noise like the noise of the seas.'† But he is calm and self-possessed as ever ; he holds to his old faith and doctrine : 'God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee afar off, like chaff when the wind whirls it from the threshing-floor on the hill-side.'

* 2 Chron. xxx. 11 ; xxxiv. 6, 9.

† 'Qualia fluctus

Æquorei faciunt, si quis procul audiat ipsos,
Tale sonat populus.'

Ovid. *Met.* xv. 604. (Alexander from Clericus.)

Though the general sense of the eighteenth chapter is clear, there is great doubt as to the translation and meaning of particular phrases. It is not agreed whether 'shadowing with wings,' or 'rustling with wings,' or 'of the winged cymbal' be the proper rendering; nor whether (to leave less likely explanations) it refers to the mountain ridges, or the armies (as in chapter viii. 8), or the boats with sails or shaped like the cymbal. It is questioned whether the 'sea' in verse 2 is the Nile, or the Red Sea, or the Mediterranean; and also what is the meaning of the epithets applied to the 'people' and 'nation' in verses 2 and 7, and whether these are to be taken to indicate Egypt and Ethiopia respectively, or both together as one power under Sabaco, or Tirhakeh. But the general sense is that Egypt and Ethiopia, like Philistia and Moab, share the general alarm at the approach of the great northern conqueror; and, as in the case of Philistia, they send ambassadors to Jerusalem, to propose an alliance against the common foe; and the prophet in reply tells them to go back and tell their countrymen—of whom he speaks in terms of unusual respect—that Jehovah will defend his own without the help of man. He calls on them, and on all the earth to expect the signal of a great deliverance, which shall come with a sudden blow from Jehovah, who is at present waiting for the fulness of time, keeping the world in a suspense like the stillness of a noonday heat, yet giving those who trust in him a quiet confidence, like that dewy cloud which supplies a certain freshness even in the midst of such heat.

We may notice again Isaiah's usual accuracy and appropriateness of thought, in reference to the Egyptian traffic by water, and especially to the light papyrus boats*—to the tallness and beauty of the Ethiopians†—and to their land which 'the rivers divide;' also the change of

* 'Conseritur bibula Memphitis cymba papyro;' Lucan iv. 136. So Pliny says (xiii. 11), 'Ex ipso quidam papyro navigia texunt.' Both quoted by Lowth.

† 'μεγίστοι καὶ κάλιστοι ἀνθρώπων πάντων,' Herodotus iii. 29, 114: quoted by Knobel, who also gives references to other writers, modern as well as ancient, as to these characteristics of the Ethiopians. The Hebrew words, which I have rendered 'tall' and 'comely,' are properly 'stretched out' and 'smooth,' but probably with the sense I have given. In chapter xlv. 14, they are called 'men of stature.'

the word 'nation' in verse 2 into 'people' in verse 7,—the formerly properly designating a heathen, and the latter a believing people.

The remarkable correspondence between the predictions in verses 13, 14 of chapter xvii. and verses 3—7 of chapter xviii., with the historical account of the sudden overthrow of Sennacherib, has induced some of the Germans to pronounce that the latter is a myth framed to agree with the prophecy. As the reaction against the contrary assertion that the prediction is miraculous, such a notion is perhaps not to be wondered at; but the really rational, as well as really Christian student, may come to the conclusion that if we take the facts of the case, the prophecy and the history as they actually are, it is possible to discover something more of the meaning, and law, of prophecy and the prophetic faculty, than has been discovered, or than will be discovered, by combining either scepticism or superstition with grammatical and antiquarian knowledge.

CHAPTER XIII.

ISAIAH XIX.—EGYPTIAN DYNASTIES IN THE TIME OF ISAIAH—CONTEMPORARY OR SUCCESSIVE.—HISTORICAL NOTICES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.—ANARCHY.—INVASION OF SARGON.—SACK OF THEBES.—TREATY BETWEEN EGYPT AND ASSYRIA.—MULTITUDE OF GODS AND OF CASTES UNFAVOURABLE TO POLITICAL UNITY.—EXCLUSIVE WISDOM OF PRIESTHOOD.—THE CITY OF DESTRUCTION.—ALEXANDER AND PTOLEMY.—TEMPLE OF ONIAS.—SEPTUAGINT.—PHILO.—CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA.—BACON ON PROPHECY.

‘THE Burden of Egypt.’ Within the limits of Isaiah’s lifetime, we find kings of the Bubastite, Tanitic, Saitic, and Ethiopian dynasties reigning in Egypt, with their respective seats of government at Sais in the west, Tanis in the east, and Thebes in the south. The wise king Bocchoris, of Sais, who laboured to define and enforce the rights of his people by just and liberal laws, was conquered, and burnt alive by Sabacon, or Sabak I., the king of Ethiopia, who thus founded an Ethiopian dynasty in Egypt. His successor, Sabak II., whom Manetho calls Sebichòs and the Jews So (Seve), made an alliance with Hoshea, king of Samaria, to support him in his refusal of continued vassalage to Shalmaneser. The first result of this alliance was the capture of Samaria by the Assyrians, with the final deportation of the people, and the substitution of a colony from some other part of the Assyrian empire. The next (whether as motive or pretext) appears to have been Sargon’s invasion of Egypt. In Isaiah xx. we find Sargon’s general laying siege to Ashdod, the most southern of the Philistian fortresses, which was supported by the Egyptian and Ethiopian kings of whose country it was the key, as Gaza and El-Arish respectively were in later times: and in Sargon’s own account, which I have already quoted,* he says that after reducing both Gaza and

* Page 193.

Ashdod (whether in the same or different campaigns) he took vengeance on their Egyptian and Ethiopian allies. And though the mutilation of that part of the Inscription makes it doubtful whether he described an actual invasion of the kingdom of Meroë, or Ethiopia, it is not improbable that to this period we may refer the destruction mentioned by Isaiah's cotemporary, Nahum, of the 'populous No-Ammon,' or Thebes, 'that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the sea, and her wall was from the sea: Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength, and it was infinite; Put and Lubim were her helpers. Yet she was carried away, she went into captivity: her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.'*

The invasion of Sargon accomplished Isaiah's threat of the 'cruel lord,' in the chapter before us, and his warning, in the chapter immediately succeeding, of the fate which would befall Egypt and Ethiopia both, within a short period of the siege of Ashdod, then in progress. And that most interesting discovery† in Sennacherib's palace, of what can hardly be other than the seal of a treaty between Sabak and the Assyrian king, gives a literal (though by no means the highest) fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction of future amity between Egypt and Assyria.

The general condition of Egypt was at this time one of civil war, anarchy, revolution, and foreign invasion. The several accounts are confused, and apparently incapable of complete reconciliation. M. Bunsen says that all Egyptologists are agreed that Manetho's dynasties between the eighteenth and thirtieth are not synchronous, though he elsewhere explains that the regular succession of kings' names in these lists does not necessarily indicate that each was the actual ruler of the country during the period thus assigned to him, since their position may have been something like

* Nahum iii. 8—10.

† Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 156. The seal itself is in the British Museum.

that of Louis XVII. and Louis XVIII. under the first French Republic and Empire.* Yet Sennacherib speaks of conquering the kings of Egypt as well as the king of Meroë, in his second campaign; Herodotus connects the overthrow of the Assyrian army with Sethos (apparently the Tanitic Zet of Manetho) and not with Tirhakeh; and the language of Isaiah in the chapter before us favours the supposition of contemporary kingdoms in Egypt at this time. He speaks of 'Egypt' (not 'the Egyptians' in the original) set against Egypt, 'city against city, and kingdom against kingdom,' and mentions 'the princes of Zoar,' or Tanis, and 'the princes of Noph,' or Memphis.† But however this may have been, those causes of political disintegration must have been already at work and discernible by Isaiah, which soon after broke up Egypt into the petty independent governments which the Greek historians called the Dodecarchy—an interregnum of fifteen years of civil wars between Sethos and Psammetichus.

The name Mizraim, like Asshur, or Moab, is both that of the country and of the traditional founder: and here again we have Egypt as a person, the distinction being kept up in the original by the use of the masculine suffixes where our Version gives the neuter *it*. The opening words of this prophecy represent Jehovah, 'who maketh the clouds his chariot' (probably here and elsewhere not without allusion to the cloud which led the Israelites, and hovered over the Mercy-seat), coming into Egypt to stir up civil war throughout the land. Egypt was famous for its multitude of gods, its minute political and social organization of castes or tribes (verse 13), and the wisdom of its sages and counsellors. Perhaps Isaiah, in his contemptuous mention of all these, and their inability to help the country in its anarchy, recognizes in them the very causes of that anarchy. The multitude of idols, and of hereditary castes, evidently must have been main hindrances to national unity, since they supplied an indefinite number of separate *foci*, or ganglions, of social life, instead of the central heart and brain of the higher or-

* *Aegyptens Stelle*, i. 121; iii. 128—146.

† See, too, Canon Cook's *Inscription of Pianchi Mer-Amon*, pp. 13, 14.

ganization : and the wisdom of the priests and the initiated kings would have the same tendency, since they had made it their exclusive possession, and employed it, not for the enlightenment and education of the people, but as the most effective instrument of the priestcraft and statecraft which controlled a population numerous and aggregated like herds of cattle, but debased, and therefore isolated, as men.

The realities of anarchy and civil war will confound the statesmen and their craft ; they will be utterly at a loss to propose means to remedy the evil, or to see what the end will be if things are left to themselves ; they will seek equally in vain for guidance from their idols and their soothsayers ; and at last another reality, the despotic rule of a cruel conqueror, will supersede both them and the anarchy they could not face with all their shams.

The Nile (the sea as it is here and elsewhere called) was the source of fertility and life to Egypt, and its failure the certain occasion of general drought and famine ; and Isaiah employs its failure as the symbol, a real part of the whole which it represents, to describe the universality of the national distress.

In the height of their calamity, they will think, first with fear, and then with hope, of Jehovah who is thus executing his counsels to the confounding of their own ; and they will turn their anxious looks to that people with whom their own nation has from ancient times been made to feel its relationship, in blessings as well as in judgments, through a Joseph no less than a Moses. And then Isaiah describes the deliverance of Egypt from its oppressors, and its participation in the faith and consequently in the blessing of Israel, in terms which were remarkably fulfilled in after times, again and again, with an amplitude which is at once an answer to the notion that he wrote after some one of the events, or that certain verses were interpolated to agree with some other. There is much doubt as to the verbal meaning of verse 18. 'The city of destruction' is the true translation of the original, but its obscurity has led to various conjectural emendations, for an account of which, with the arguments for or against each,

I must refer the reader to the commentators. Calvin's explanation is that five-sixths of Egypt shall be saved, but the sixth part destroyed : an explanation characteristic of the stern reformer, who liked to contemplate judgment as an end, and not merely as a means, but which is far less suitable to the context than that which changes 'destruction' to 'salvation' (הַחַיָּה לַהַחַיָּה), and considers five to be a round number* to express 'many.' The interpretation of it as a proper name, Leontopolis, or Heliopolis, is contrary, says Gesenius, to the use of the word 'called,' which Isaiah always appropriates to symbolic appellations.† It was not this, but the next verse, which Onias referred to in favour of his temple at Leontopolis, and therefore the argument for its having been interpolated by him seems sufficiently refuted, even if it could be explained how the Jews of Palestine accepted such an interpolation from the hated sectarian. The literal coincidences, however, between these details and the events, and among others between the promise of a 'saviour' and a 'great one,' and the titles of Alexander the Great and Ptolemy the Saviour, are noticeable and interesting ; though he must be unobservant of like coincidences in all history and daily life who is driven by them to choose between miracle and forgery. The general idea of Isaiah, however we may explain details, is that the true faith of Israel will be widely spread through Egypt ; the altar and the pillar may be rather poetical images, taken from the history of the patriarchs‡, than attempts to predict or prescribe actual mode of worship, though it is not impossible that the prophet may have conceived of such helps to their faith being lawful in that distant land, though forbidden to the Jews at home, who were to sacrifice on no altar but at Jerusalem. In the main, however, he apparently contemplates Jerusalem itself as the actual place of worship, when he speaks of Egypt 'serving,' that is, worshipping Jehovah, with Assyria and Israel : yet we must not overlook the freedom from formal restrictions in his language, which thus anti-

* As it is in Genesis xliii. 34 ; xlv. 22 ; xlvii. 2.

† Chap. iv. 3 ; lxi. 6 ; lxii. 4.

‡ Grotius refers to Joshua, xxii. 10—34.

cipates the time when the true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth, and neither in this or that mountain, nor in Jerusalem; and still more noteworthy is the catholic spirit which could comprehend not only the comparatively friendly Egypt, but also Assyria, the cruellest of enemies, in Israel's own covenant of peace and blessing from Jehovah.

The fulfilment of these promises to Egypt was ample; first beginning with the overthrow of Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, and the friendly intercourse with Hezekiah in the latter years of his reign; and then extending through successive generations, beyond the troubles of the Dodecarchy, the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar, and the mad cruelty of Cambyses. Alexander the Great delivered them from the grievous Persian yoke, and he and his successors greatly favoured the people and improved the country. He settled a great many Jews in Alexandria, giving them equal privileges with the Macedonians; and this Hebrew immigration was still farther promoted by Ptolemy Soter, so that Philo reckoned that in his time there were a million Jews in the country. The temple of Onias, the Septuagint version of the Bible, the books of the Apocrypha, the philosophy and theology of Philo, indicate not only what these Jews were in themselves, but enable us to infer with certainty how great must have been their example and influence in humanizing the Egyptians, and bringing them to the knowledge and worship of the true God. And still more were these results apparent, still more amply was this prophecy fulfilled, when Alexandria became one of the great centres of the Christian Church. There are other instances as real, but there is hardly one more striking, of the correctness of Lord Bacon's rule that, in these interpretations, we must 'allow the latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies; being of the nature of their Author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages; though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age.'*

* *Advancement of Learning*, book ii. 3.

CHAPTER XIV.

ISAIAH XX.—SARGON, SHALMANESER, TARTAN.—THE SIEGE OF ASHDOD.—SHEBNA'S POLICY.—ISAIAH'S SYMBOLICAL PROTEST AGAINST IT.—HE WALKS NAKED AND BAREFOOT.—ISAIAH'S POLICY PROBABLY MORE EXPEDIENT—CERTAINLY MORE BEFITTING ISRAEL'S PLACE IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY.

THE name of Sargon occurs nowhere in the Bible except in the chapter before us: but the Inscriptions of this king—Sargina, or Sarrukin—from which I have already given some extracts, show him to have been not inferior in war or peace to his son Sennacherib. From the time of Sanctius and Jungmann (quoted by Vitringa) to the present day, there has been much learned discussion as to whether the Shalmaneser of the Bible and of Josephus was the same with Sargon, or his immediate predecessor: but the recent discovery* of the annals of Shalmaneser, in their proper place between those of Tiglath-Pileser and Sargon, must—unless their interpretation is disputed—decide the question, as it had indeed already been decided on the ground of comparative probability, by the greater number of the Assyriologists. I shall therefore not here re-open the discussion, nor that, which has been connected with it, whether Sargon was the hereditary king, or a successful rebel. But there can be no doubt that the Sargon of Isaiah is the Sargina who built the city of which the

* 'Among the other treasures brought back from Assyria by Mr. George Smith is a small fragment which fits on to the *fasti* tablet published in W. A. I. ii. 52, 1. It definitely settles the question as to the reign of a Shalmaneser between Tiglath Pileser and Sargon. Tiglath-Pileser, we find, in his last year, 'took the lands of Bel' a second time. Then comes the dividing line, and the statement of Shalmaneser's accession to the throne. According to the next line, the king remained at home during the eponym of the Prefect of Amida, but the three following years were occupied in campaigns against a country or countries the names of which are unfortunately lost. After this, we have the dividing line again, and a notice of Sargon's accession.'—*The Academy*, Oct. 15, 1873, p. 400.

site is now called Khorsabad, but which retained the name of Sarghun as late as the Arab conquest. The remains of Sargon's palace were discovered by M. Botta; and M. Oppert has published the chief Inscription found there, with Latin and French translations, as well as translations of two other Inscriptions of the same king.* His conquests through fifteen campaigns extended from Babylonia and Susiana in the south to Armenia and Cappadocia in the north, and from Media in the east (where he built cities to which he transplanted the conquered populations of other lands in the usual way), to Syria, Arabia and Egypt in the west: he claims to have taken Tyre, and to have received tribute from the king of 'Yatnan' (Cyprus†) who dwelt at seven days' distance in the midst of the sea, and whose names had been unknown to the kings his fathers from the remotest times. A monument of Sargon, now in the Berlin museum, was found in Cyprus; and Josephus‡ states on the authority of Menander that Cyprus was about this time subject to Tyre, and that the king of Assyria besieged Tyre for five years, having previously reduced all the east of Phœnicia to submission. Tartan is said to be not a proper name but the common title of the Assyrian commanders in chief.§ After he had taken Ashdod, it possibly continued in the power of the Assyrians till it was besieged, as Herodotus relates,|| for twenty-nine years by Psammetichus. It is now a little village, retaining its old name. From the words of the Khorsabad Inscription which I have already quoted, it would seem that Ashdod was twice taken by Sargon; and this siege is apparently the second of the two.

In the third year of Hezekiah, Hoshea, king of Samaria, had brought Shalmaneser's overwhelming power upon him by refusing his accustomed tribute, and calling in So, king

* *Les Inscriptions Assyriennes des Sargonides*, par Jules Oppert, 1862. *Grande Inscription du Palais de Khorsabad*, 1863. Sir Henry Rawlinson has given a detailed account of these Inscriptions in his *Commentary*, from which (as well as from those of M. Oppert) I have already quoted.

† 'Itanus sur l'Ile de Crète, et puis nom de l'Ile de Chypre.'—Oppert, *Inscriptions des Sargonides*, p. 21.

‡ *Ant.* ix. 14, 2.

§ Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 148, note.

|| ii. 157.

of Egypt, to support him in his rebellion. Yet this was now the policy contemplated by the government and people of Hezekiah. The vassalage into which Ahaz had brought Judah was no doubt intolerable: Isaiah's repeated references to the 'oppressors,' 'the spoilers,' and the 'robbers,' indicate what we might expect from the character of the Assyrians,—that the tribute was almost the whole produce of the country, such as has been requisite to buy off the hordes of Huns, Tartars, or Mahrattas, of other times: and since the Assyrian armies were constantly on the borders of the little kingdom of Judah—during the sieges of Samaria, Tyre, Ashdod, and elsewhere—probably all payments were insufficient to protect the Jews from the rapacious licence of a soldiery whose royal leader could fix 'three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold,' as the price of amity with Hezekiah, and then immediately on receiving payment march on Jerusalem with the avowed determination to 'destroy it utterly,' after deporting the inhabitants. Any prospect might seem better than the existing misery: and if Hoshea's alliance with Sebichôs had only hastened the ruin of the kingdom of Ephraim, Judah hoped for a more successful result from the like policy. We have, perhaps, in chapter xviii. 2, an indication that the Ethiopico-Egyptian king had himself proposed such an alliance; and it is plain from chapters xxxi. xxxii. that the Jewish government made advances on their side; while in the chapter before us Isaiah seems to describe the general feeling of his countrymen when he speaks of 'Ethiopia their expectation, and Egypt their glory.' A policy in which one state is to be played off against another, and perhaps by one weaker than either, always seems the height of wisdom to the crafty diplomatists who play the game, and worse than folly to the looker on: and such was the policy of Shebna, Hezekiah's minister,—in his own eyes no doubt 'a politician who could circumvent God,'*—and such the opinion of it entertained by Isaiah, one of whose energetic protests against it we have before us. He, as well as his children, was 'a sign to the people,' and not only like them by his

* *Hamlet*, v. 1.

name and presence, but he now appeared—probably while the result of the siege of Ashdod was still doubtful, and the public expectation in Jerusalem at its height—naked and barefoot, that is, without the hair garment which, girt with a leathern girdle, was the prophet's dress, as it was of the Christian ascetics in after times.* He appeared, in fact, as the writers of the middle ages would have expressed it, 'in his shirt:' for this is a usual meaning of the phrase, 'naked,' in Hebrew, as in all languages, and one which is moreover indicated here by the 'barefoot,' which would be otherwise superfluous, as well as by the additional description of the captives he figured. The Masoretic punctuation joins the 'three years' with the words that follow, in which case the sentence may be rendered 'a three years' sign' and understood not that Isaiah walked for three years, but that the event was to occur in three years: and the prediction would thus somewhat correspond in form with that in chapter xvi. 14. Vitranga and Lowth suppose that, in fact, Isaiah walked three days, 'a day for a year;'[†] others consider the symbolical act to have been occasional, though repeated throughout the three years. There is nothing improbable in this last view; it is that most in agreement with the letter of the text; and there is an appearance of the chapter being a brief account of the three years' preaching (perhaps the time the siege was going on), during which Isaiah used to appear as described, and speaking to this effect. Even taken thus literally this symbolic act is far less difficult to comprehend than some of those of other prophets: but in all cases a part of the difficulty arises, no doubt, from our inability to realize adequately the habits and feelings of an ancient and eastern people. To those of Isaiah's countrymen who were not hardened against all such impressions, the sight of the prophet and the sound of his warning voice in the streets and market-places of Jerusalem, while he showed forth the impending fate of their expected deliverers, and thus led them to infer their

* See 2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4; Matt. iii. 4. Winer compares the pallium of the Greek philosophers with the prophet's mantle.

† Compare Numbers xiv. 34; Ezekiel iv. 6.

own, would have been full of significance. I have noticed before the practice of driving the prisoners of war naked and like herds of cattle: the word here translated 'lead away' is that usually applied to leading or driving cattle; and the monuments of Egypt, as well as Assyria, still depict such strings of captives, naked, or with merely an apron, and frequently with their hands bound with their own hair. One of Belzoni's drawings of tombs at Thebes, says Gesenius, exhibits both Ethiopian and Egyptian prisoners in this way.

We see from Isaiah's subsequent denunciations of the Egyptian alliance, that the ground of them was, that the people of Israel should trust in Jehovah their own King for deliverance, and in no other power whatever. Though he encouraged Hezekiah to the boldest defiance and most resolute resistance of Sennacherib at the last, there is no indication that he advised or approved his first refusal of the tribute which Ahaz had consented to pay: on the contrary, the whole tenour of the prophet's discourses is, that the subjection to the Assyrian yoke was a needful though harsh discipline for the nation; that Jehovah would himself effect their deliverance in due time; and that they were to wait patiently till then.* This simple and entire trust in Jehovah, as the Head of the nation, and of each member of it in particular,—as their actual Ruler, and ever-present Friend, watching over them every moment with the care of a Husband and a Father,

* As a modern writer has charged Jeremiah with treachery worthy of death, in preaching submission to Nebuchadnezzar, it is worth while to see how his conduct looked to one who had opportunity, and was competent, to interpret it by the political experience of his own day. Niebuhr, writing, Jan. 10, 1809, of the abortive desires of Stein and others to throw off the yoke of Napoleon, says, 'I told you, as I told every one, how indignant I felt at the senseless prating of those who talked of desperate resolves as of a tragedy. Ever since the peace of Tilsit, my maxims have been those which Phocion preached to the Athenians of his age; and nowhere have I seen, among the declaimers on the other side, a Demosthenes, or even a Hyperides, but many a Dicaeus. To bear our fate with dignity and wisdom, that the yoke might be lightened, was my doctrine, and I supported it with the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, who spoke and acted very wisely, living as he did under King Zedekiah, in the times of Nebuchadnezzar, though he would have given different counsel had he lived under Judas Maccabæus, in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes: 'Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.'—*Niebuhr's Life*, vol. i. p. 261.

—this is the master-light of all Isaiah's philosophy, moral and political, and the one lesson which in a hundred forms he is continually teaching the people. Whether he was right, whether this is indeed the one thing 'which makes a nation happy and keeps it so,' the reader must decide for himself: I will only point out that to us, judging after the event, the good sense and sound practical statesmanship of Isaiah's policy, and the folly of that of Shebna and the public opinion which supported his government, are alike obvious. It was no doubt an admirable policy for the interests of Egypt that Palestine, with its mountain-defiles and strong fortresses, should consent to be her northern military frontier, and that Hebrew blood and treasure should be expended in maintaining the fortified cities of Samaria and Jerusalem, Lachish and Libnah, against the advance of Assyria. If the invaders overcame these obstacles at last, Egypt would meanwhile have gained some years of security at no cost to herself, and would be then better able to meet a half-exhausted foe; while, if the resistance of the Hebrews was successful, they themselves would have been so weakened as to be at the mercy of the ally they had been serving too well. In no case could Israel be other than a sufferer: if the contest of the great belligerents could have been fought out in some other country than Palestine there might have been a little more plausibility in Shebna's scheme for a balance of power, though even then the day of retribution might have been expected at last, from friend, if not from foe: but when Palestine itself must inevitably be 'the cockpit'* of Asia and Africa, the one thing which sound policy indicated was, that it should, if possible, remain neutral. There was a moment of Israel's history (Ewald has finely remarked), when it seemed possible that David might have laid the foundations of an empire like that of Rome, as there was that Solomon might have led the way to the reign of a philosophy as sovereign as that of Greece: but the innate energy, the proper life of the nation, rejected these temptations to quit its appointed

* Belgium, or the Spanish Netherlands, has been called 'the cockpit of Europe.'

place in universal history; and like Rome and Greece, in their appointed spheres, and like every other nation worthy the name, it went resolutely forward, at whatever sacrifice of all its other and conflicting interests. Now, this appointed place and course was that of witnessing in its institutions, history, and literature, for what Ewald calls 'true religion,' but which I prefer to call the fact that men stand in a real and actual relation to God, and that God is really and actually present with men to uphold that relation at all times, and to educate them through it to know him, and to show forth his image more and more. If, then, the Jews in the time of Isaiah could not secure the independence and other political interests of their country without abandoning their right place in the world, they would have been bound in duty and reason to sacrifice these, and, as Isaiah taught, to cleave to Jehovah at all hazards, and leave the event to him. But, in fact, not only was a political neutrality their only sound policy, but they really were very likely to have succeeded in maintaining it, if it had been based on a national faith and practical piety. It does not need a special miracle, a suspension of the ordinary laws of the universe, to make true religion, with its fruits of virtue and honesty, the best policy, whether for a nation or an individual. The very case is already provided for in those laws as originally laid down. History and biography attest the fact sufficiently: though they show that the end is constantly effected through so many difficulties, or, as St. Paul would say, through so much weakness of the flesh, that nothing but the reality of the faith within could have supplied the necessary courage for enduring till the end.

CHAPTER XV.

ISAIAH XXI.—A VISION IN A DREAM OR TRANCE.—BIBLE MEANING OF INSPIRATION.—DIVINATION.—ANCIENT ORACLES.—SPECIAL POWERS OF NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS.—ONE GREECE, ONE SHAKSPEARE.—DISCERNMENT OF POLITICAL EFFECTS IN THEIR CAUSES LESS POSSIBLE NOW THAN FORMERLY.—‘THE DESERT OF THE SEA.’—THE PROPHET A WATCHMAN.—THE TRIBES OF ARABIA.—SUBJECTED BY ASSYRIA.

THE school of commentators represented by Professors Alexander and Delitzsch find, in that part of Isaiah xxi. which relates to Babylon, ‘wonderful coincidences with history, both sacred and profane, which could not be ascribed to Isaiah, or to any contemporary writer, without conceding the reality of prophetic inspiration.’ These coincidences are the mention of the Medes and Persians, as the conquerors of Babylon ; the night of festivity changed into a night of terror, corresponding with the statements of Herodotus, Xenophon, and Daniel, that the court was revelling when Cyrus took the city ; the vivid picture of the equally historical surprise of the revellers by the enemy : the asses and camels which Herodotus and Xenophon describe as used for riding in the Persian armies, while the latter also represents their advancing two by two ; and the breaking of all the idols by a nation who, Herodotus says, not only thought it unlawful to use images, but imputed folly to those who did it. The rationalists accept the premises of this argument as unquestionable, but draw the conclusion that the prophecy was, in fact, written in the time of Cyprus, either after the event, or so shortly before it that a politician could have foreseen these historical details which they consider to be discoverable in the text. I have already pointed out how far these

opponents appear to me to be advocating different sides of the same truth, and helping us towards a higher view which shall comprehend and reconcile all that is really true in both. And I have said all that I have to say on the historical and literary facts and arguments of the case. But there is one point to which, often as I have adverted to it, these words of Dr. Alexander's warn me that I must return, if I would sift the whole question of prophecy to the bottom.

The word 'inspiration,' in the passage just quoted from this learned commentator, is there lowered to a sense which is neither proper to the Bible nor to the Christian Church;* and is used to designate a power of predicting events, such as the heathen oracles and the mediæval astrologers claimed, and by their contemporaries were believed to exercise. It is commonly said that in the latter cases there was fraud or delusion, while the Hebrew prophets really possessed the gift: and there can be no doubt that the Jews generally, and very little doubt that Isaiah and the other prophets themselves, would have maintained that these were enabled, on particular occasions, to exercise such a gift of prediction; though the wise and religious among them, whether people or teachers, would not have allowed that it was in this gift that the reality of prophetic inspiration consisted. But conscience, no less than reason, forbids me to deny that the Greek and Roman oracles, and the astrologers of the middle ages, did utter numerous predictions which were fulfilled with no greater mixture of failures than those of the Hebrews, and which were of no less social and political importance to those to whom they were addressed. Cicero held that the reality of the power of divination was proved alike by the universal belief of the greatest sages, and the manifest correspondence between the predictions and events of the

* The Prayer-Book (the authoritative manual of a large portion of the Christian Church in England) uses the word 'inspiration' in the true sense, in the first Collect of the Communion Service,—'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit;' and in the Collect for the fifth Sunday after Easter,—'That by Thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good:' while the fact that such inspiration is the ordinary, habitual state of every member of the Church, is asserted or implied in every sentence of the Book.

oracle of Delphi in particular.* And Niebuhr denies that the merely sceptical arguments solve the question:† and his observations suggest the thought whether the power did exist, not as a miraculous witness of the true faith, but as a human endowment of the earlier ages, like the powers of language-making and myth-making, which have been already noticed.

The coincidences between the words of the prophecy before us, and the events of the taking of Babylon by Cyrus are striking; but I cannot admit that they have the character—miraculous or historical—attributed to them. I think that they are properly and sufficiently explained by reference to the Babylon of Isaiah's own time; and by the ordinary prophetic faculty of so declaring the principles and laws of political societies that they were again and again realized—and occasionally with curious coincidences of words and events—in successive periods. If the reader still thinks that such an insight into the future, and such an instinct beyond the limits of that insight, as I here claim for Isaiah, are beyond any known powers, intellectual or imaginative, of the human mind, I would beg him to consider that there are many instances in the history of the world of a single man appearing with powers unparalleled by those of any other; and in like manner each nation, ancient and modern, that deserves the name, had or has a special vocation for which it has exhibited powers which no other has shown.

* See Coleridge's *Lay Sermons*, p. 91 (3rd edit.); and Grote's *History of Greece*, ii. 339. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, ii. (Divination.) And compare Stanley's *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, i. pp. 467, 468.

† 'These oracles of the ancients were a strange thing. It is easy to say it was all an artifice of the priests; but these priests themselves were a part of the people. Besides, such explanations did well enough for the time of the French philosophers as they were called; but we want deeper inquiries at this day. Why is it they were so long respected by the people? How does it happen that we find them in some shape or other, elsewhere? Did man, in those early periods, stand nearer to nature?' Lieber's *Reminiscences of Niebuhr*, p. 225. The following passage is in the like tone:—'It seems that civilization must have started by some immediate inspiration; for whence comes it, that no tribe, though discovered centuries ago in a savage state, has advanced since then, except by some impulse from foreign nations already civilized? The mythology, too, of almost every nation, whose civilization dates from remote periods, teaches that a god or goddess descended to instruct man in agriculture, the use of iron, and other elementary arts. I hardly can conceive how man could have invented by himself the complicated process of baking bread, at so early a period as that in which we find him already provided with this indispensable article.'—*Ibid.* p. 227.

There has been but one Homer, one Socrates, one Raphael, one Shakspeare ; the greater part even of intellectual and educated men live and die without any perceptible trace of the gift which enabled Newton to grasp very complicated theorems with intuitive apprehension ; and Mozart in infancy could compose music with a knowledge of the laws of harmony which few grown men could acquire by any study. There has been one Greece, from which the world derives its philosophy and art ; one Rome, to which it owes its laws and politics ; and what would the world be now, and to the end of time, if there were no England ? And we neither deny these facts, nor call them miracles. And before we hurry to a conclusion, let us ask ourselves whether the Hebrew nation may not have had a vocation of its own, whether Isaiah may not have been a great and typical man in that nation, and yet neither the one nor the other be the less real or the less human for all that. It may be added, that one characteristic difference between ancient and modern nations is that our social relations are far more complicated,—the intricate results of so many more causes than were at work in the ancient world, and that consequently an intuitive discernment of causes and effects was more possible then than now : for philosophers tell us that every event could be certainly predicted if we knew all the causes that are at work to produce it, seeing that like effects always come of like causes.

‘The burden of the desert of the sea.’ This enigmatical name for Babylon, was no doubt suggested by the actual character of the country in which the city stood. It was an endless breadth or succession of undulations ‘like the sea,’ without any cultivation or even any tree : low, level, and full of great marshes ; and which used to be overflowed by the Euphrates, till the whole plain became a sea, before the river was banked in by Semiramis, as Herodotus says.* But the prophet may allude also to the social and spiritual desert which Babylon was to the nations

* Herod. i. 184 ; Grote's *Hist. of Greece*, ix. 43. Dr. Schrader reads ‘king of the sea,’ as a title or description of Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon, in an Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser.—*Die Keilinschriften*, u. d. A. T., p. 213.

over which its authority extended, and especially to the captive Israelite: and perhaps, at the same time, to the multitude of the armies which it poured forth like the waters of the sea. So Ezekiel tells the Jews that they shall be led by God into 'the wilderness of the people,' as their fathers were into the wilderness of the land of Egypt; contrasting the human with the natural wilderness—alike devoid of true life and order. And St. John, in the Apocalypse, adopts the same imagery in describing Babylon, the dramatic representative of Rome: 'I will show thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. . . . So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. . . . And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. . . . After these things I saw another angel, and he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.'

This prophecy has more the character of a vision than any other in the book, excepting that in the sixth chapter. It seems to indicate that the writer had been in a state of trance, perhaps somewhat like that which Coleridge describes in the introduction to his '*Kubla Khan, or a Vision in a Dream*,' where he says he 'continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that, indeed, can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort: on awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, paper, and ink, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines,'—which he there gives, but of which the current was abruptly cut off. We may get some light too from our ordinary experience in dreams here, as on chapter vi.

The unity of the whole is not less striking than the vividness of its parts; but it is a unity derived from the imagination, and not from the logical faculty; and it overleaps the bonds of time and space, and brings remote

objects together, just as the imagination of the dreamer does, without any sense of incongruity.

'It cometh : '—a man in a dream would not ask what ; —he simply feels that something terrible, and from a terrible land, is sweeping over the scene, like one of the whirlwinds which still, as then, drive furiously up from the southern deserts.* Then he sees that there is reason enough for this terror, for the land—his own land—is filled with spoilers, robbing by fraud or violence : just what, in fact, Isaiah and his countrymen experienced as the condition of their daily existence during many years of his life.

He recognizes at once the 'terrible land,' 'the desert of the sea,' from which the evil has come : he calls Elam and Media to 'go up and besiege,' and in a moment all the sighing of the oppressed has ceased.

By a new act of the imagination, he identifies himself with the besieged city ; and experiences all the sensations of extreme terror, as he sees, in an instant of time, the preparations for a feast, and the setting the watch, the actual feasting, and the call to arms without and within the walls ; and knows at once, as an inhabitant of the city, what his doom is.

Then he half returns to the consciousness that he is Isaiah, a prophet in Jerusalem, and no Babylonian, and explains how this catastrophe had been revealed to him. He is still overmastered by his imagination, but it takes a new direction. He was accustomed to wait whole days and nights in fasting, meditation, and prayer, when seeking to know the mind of Jehovah ; and these special acts were but the outward and occasional expressions of a life of spiritual waiting and watching,—of patient meditation upon God's word and works, and no less patient waiting to see the political events of his own day, however dark and unpromising, open out into results according with that word and those works in the old times. The politics of his nation were involved in all the prophet's hopes and prayers ; and as the watchman looks from the watch-tower

* See Layard's account of the 'shergis, or burning winds from the south ; *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 364, where he quotes this verse of Isaiah.

in time of war, so he stood on the watch-tower of divinely illuminated reason, and looked out into the world,—taking a comprehensive view of all that was passing or coming there; discerning the significance and importance of each event; and accordingly either warning the nation, for whom he kept guard, of approaching evil, or comforting them with the announcement of deliverance.* And thus his prophetic office and faculty now represent themselves to him, and he describes them, as his setting a watchman, by command of Jehovah, to watch and report what he sees. This watchman—no other than the projected form of the prophet himself—stands on an ideal watch-tower, and sees a host of chariots, horses, asses, camels, approaching; and, after listening for a moment with the eagerness of a watchful sentry, he gives the alarm in the phrase familiar to the Hebrew shepherd—‘A lion!’ And he then reports in detail that he had watched continually night and day for many days, when at last he saw the invading army, which the prophet, in the co-instantaneousness of all the parts of a vision, was already become aware of, before he—the other self—could report it. ‘Lord’ is the title appropriated to God, and not equivalent to ‘Sir’ as the Authorized Version implies;—which heightens, without at all confusing, the visionary character of the whole, by making the prophet recognize his own individuality, and the fact that he himself is the watchman, and set there by Jehovah. The watchman speaks again after an interval, and reports that all is over,—Babylon and her gods are fallen. The watchman may be conceived as at first standing on the walls of Babylon, and then transferred in a moment of time to Jerusalem; but it is simpler to leave the ideal indefiniteness of the text.

The prophet utters a half ironical, half compassionate exclamation, on the fate of his country’s enemy; and concludes by declaring, both to that enemy and to his own countrymen, that what he has thus declared he has heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel.

There are different opinions as to the true rendering of

* Compare Isaiah lii. 8; lvi. 10; Jeremiah vi. 17; Ezekiel xxxiii. 2; Habak. ii. 1.

details. Some suppose verses 1 and 2 to describe the sufferings of Babylon on the invasion of the Medes and Persians; some say it is more correct to read, in verses 7 and 8, 'And should he see . . . let him hearken;' some understand, 'he cried like a lion for loudness;' and some refer the 'threshing' to Israel. On the last two renderings I would notice that I have followed Jeremiah's apparent mode of understanding them,* which also seems to me the more graphic.

The genuineness of the rest of the chapter is not disputed; but modern criticism has not decided whether the two 'Burdens' of 'Dumah' and 'Arabia' are separate prophecies, or parts of one prophecy, in the margin of which the two titles would then stand: nor whether Dumah is the Arab tribe of Dumah (descended from Ishmael,† and having perhaps given its name to the Dumah Eljandel still found on the confines of Arabia and Syria), or an enigmatical name for Edom,‡ as the Septuagint supposes, and as the mention of Seir just after seems to indicate, though the latter may be taken as referring only to the tract of desert and mountain in that quarter. To which we, who accept the prophecy against Babylon as also written by Isaiah, have to add the question whether both, or the former of these, should be taken as its continuation. And, lastly, what is the purport of these seven verses?

The image of the watchman suggests a connection between the first and second portions; and the names Dumah, Seir, Arabia, Dedanim, Tema, and Kedar, between the second and third. And indeed there seems to me a remarkable unity of thought and imagery indicating that the whole is one prophecy. If we take the text as it stands, the general sense will apparently be, that at the time when Judah was actually suffering the oppressions of the

* Chapter l. 44; li. 33. With the latter compare Micah iv. 12, 13.

† Genesis xxv. 14; 1 Chron. i. 30.

‡ 'Dumah' is deep and utter silence, and therefore the land of the dead (Ps. xciv. 17; cxv. 17). The name אֶדֹם is turned into an emblem of the future state of Edom by the removal of the *a* sound from the beginning of the word to the end.' Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, English translation, vol. i. p. 384.

‘treacherous dealer,’ and the ‘spoiler,’ but was promised deliverance by Isaiah, he is applied to by the Arab tribes, whose caravans conducted through Arabia the course of a commerce which even then might exchange the tin of Britain with the ivory of India: they inquire whether they may hope to escape the great robber; and the prophet replies, after a hesitation which seems half contemptuous, half indicative of the obscurity in which the future was involved to him, that they will not escape. Gesenius observes that, though the voice calling to the watchman out of Seir may without improbability be taken merely as a poetic image, it is also quite probable that it refers to an actual inquiry. It was not less likely that the neighbouring nations should consult a prophet of Jehovah, than that Balak should apply to Balaam, Ahaziah consult Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, or Cræsus the oracle of Delphi.

The tribes who traversed, as they still traverse, the deserts of Arabia and Syria, with their flocks and herds, with trade-caravans, or on plundering forays, are chiefly traced, in the records of Genesis, to Abraham, through Hagar and Keturah,—Nebaioth, Dedan, and Tema as sons of Ishmael, and Kedar as the grandson of Keturah; but some also to Joktan and to Cush. We find these Arabs—Midianites, Amalekites, and children of the east—in-
vading Israel, in the time of the Judges; paying tribute to Jehoshaphat and Uzziah; and having one of their settlements taken possession of by the Simeonites in the reign of Hezekiah, after they had exterminated the tribe,—an event which may possibly be connected with the present prophecy.* Dedan and Tema are elsewhere† connected with each other, and with Edom and other northern tribes of Arabia: Tema is mentioned by Ptolemy; and Kedar by Pliny, by Stephanus of Byzantium, and by Theodoret, who says that in his time the Kedranites pastured their flocks in the province of Babylon: and Bochart traces to Dedan, the traders in the ivory and ebony of India, the name of Daden, an island in the Persian Gulf; while Seetzen found Tema in the caravan-route between Mecca and Damascus.

* Judges vi. 3; 2 Chron. xvii. 11; xxvi. 7; 1 Chron. iv. 39, 43.

† Jeremiah xxv. 23; xlix. 7—8; Ezek. xxv. 13.

In Genesis xxxvii., and Job vi. 19, we have the caravans mentioned, and in Ezekiel xxvii., an ample account of the trade which they carried on; while Kedar, known by its tents of black hair-cloth, and rich in the flocks which formed its staple commerce, seems to have been distinguished from these purely trading tribes, by greater estrangement from civilized intercourse and courtesy, as might have been expected from their different habits.* Sir Henry Rawlinson finds the names of Tehaman (Teman), Damun, Kidar (Kedar), Khagarin (Hagarenes), and Nabaut (Nebaioth), in a list of 'the Aramæan tribes who lined the Tigris and Euphrates,' subjugated by Sennacherib, and from whom he carried off 'an enormous booty' of men, women, and cattle, of which the kinds and numbers are specified: and among the countries whose kings brought 'their accustomed tribute' to Sennacherib, he reads that of Huduma, or Edom.†

* Song of Solomon i. 5; Isaiah xlii. 11; lx. 7; Ezek. xxvii. 21: Psalm cxx. 5; Jeremiah ii. 10.

† *Outline*, pp. 19, 22. Compare Oppert, *Inscriptions des Sargonides*, pp. 42, 44, where the same names are found.

CHAPTER XVI.

ISAIAH XXII.—POLITICAL PARTIES AT JERUSALEM.—SHEBNA AND THE MAJORITY.
—ELIAKIM AND THE MINORITY.—ISAIAH'S ATTACK ON SHEBNA.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE SIEGE.—TOPOGRAPHY OF JERUSALEM.—SITE OF ZION.
—SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE AND KING.—FALL OF SHEBNA.—SUFFERINGS OF MODERN NATIONS FROM INVASION.—MORAL AND RELIGIOUS RESULTS.—PRUSSIA.—SWITZERLAND.

TO an ordinary Englishman, accustomed all his life to hear denunciations of the policy of the government followed by anticipations of the downfall of its author, and of the benefits which the country must expect from the new policy of his successor in the ministry, it may seem superfluous to examine seriously the notion that the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah consists of two separate prophecies, or that its unity needs proving by such arguments as he will find in the commentators.

The date of the prophecy is evidently that of the fourteenth year* of Hezekiah's reign, and of the third cam-

* This date, and the Hebrew chronology of this period must of course be changed, if the 'Assyrian Canon' should be established. If it is made certain that this long list of names has been accurately read and understood, and if it supplies a chronology which solves all difficulties without substituting new ones, the Hebrew dates must be set aside. But while the question is only one of general probability, and such it seems to me to be as yet, I must think that the authority of contemporary documents, or extracts of documents, of a nation having at the time the political and literary culture exhibited in the writings of the Hebrew prophets and historians, is to be preferred to that of a list of names put together many years after the dates they are supposed to mark, and by a nation with the history and culture indicated by the Inscriptions of Sargon, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon.

Professor Rawlinson thus describes the Canon:—'The Assyrian Canon (discovered by Sir Henry Rawlinson, among the antiquities in the British Museum, and published by him in the *Athenæum*, Nos. 1812, and 2064), an account of Assyrian chronology from about B.C. 909 to B.C. 680, impressed on a number of clay tablets in the reign of Sardanapalus the son of Esarhaddon, all now more or less broken, but supplying each other's deficiencies and yielding by careful comparison a complete chronological scheme covering

paign of Sennacherib; and, more precisely, during the time that the Assyrian armies were overrunning Judæa, but before they had appeared under the walls of Jerusalem. And a comparison of the accounts in the Assyrian Inscriptions and the books of Kings and Chronicles with the discourse before us, enables us, at the end of twenty-five centuries, to see the very form and pressure of those ancient times. There is indeed a difficulty from that peculiarity of Hebrew grammar noticed before, which permits an interchange of the past and future tenses of the verb in such a way as to make it a matter of discussion with translators which of the two, or whether the present tense instead of either, will best express the force of the original. The verbs in the description of the preparation for the siege with all its circumstances, are translated by Gesenius and others as presents,—they understanding them to describe the facts as Isaiah sees them in his mind's eye, and just before their actual occurrence. No doubt this is the true view in the main, and we may be well content with it, if the slight haze which it leaves over certain details of the picture cannot be dispelled by any modern insight: but it is obvious that there is a haze. The alarm of the city and its reckless jollity, the repairs of the fortifications and the array of the enemy in the neighbouring valleys, imply some lapse of time during their course; and as the whole conditions of ancient and Eastern life require us to believe that this prophecy was spoken, and not first published in writing as it might be now, the question presents itself whether any Hebrew scholarship can fix the exact point of time at which it was spoken, and so distinguish the facts which the prophet saw with his bodily eye from those present to him in vision. No such distinction may be possible now; the master-artist himself may have obliterated any original differences between the actual and the ideal objects of his discourse; but thus much at least we may see,—that the actual facts, to which Isaiah could at the moment point with his hand, were such as to enable

a space of 230 years. The chronology of the whole period is verified by a recorded solar eclipse, which is evidently that of June 15, B.C. 763.—*Manual of Ancient History*, p. 7.

his hearers to follow him in filling up the blank portions of the canvas. If when he spoke they could see people on the housetops looking wistfully in the direction of Lachish, before which the Assyrian army was at the moment lying, it would seem hardly a figure of speech to tell them that the valleys of Hinnom and Rephaim, beyond which their eyesight might not carry them, were full of Persian cavalry, though in fact they saw nothing but green corn waving, nor recognized as yet any sign of an enemy along the mile or two of the western highway which might be visible from Jerusalem:—for they well knew that a very few miles more of that road would take them into the heart of Sennacherib's camp. And so of the rest. And if the present and the future of that day have long become one ideal past to us, the whole harmonious picture is not the less true to the life,—true to the old Hebrew life which actually was then and there, and which is still here for us to see; and true no less to the human life of our own and every other day.

Let us then look at the picture as it is, after noticing its significant and somewhat enigmatical title, analogous to that of the previous prophecy against Babylon. It is apparently taken—we need not doubt by Isaiah himself—from the expression in verse 5, which seems to be itself suggested by the fact that it is in vision that the prophet sees the trouble and spoiling of the city which to his outward eye was at the moment showing signs of self-confidence. Titles stand first, but then, as now, were written last, to designate the subject written of; and this prophecy is a vision of the political state and prospects of the city which stood in the midst of the valleys of Judah, and of the political party and minister who ruled the city at that time. Perhaps the thought that this city was the centre and source of all prophetic vision,—that 'out of Zion should go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem,' at all times and for all peoples,—may have added to Isaiah's sense of the propriety of the present title; but the other is more likely to have first suggested it.

Hezekiah had from the beginning of his reign given proof of his faith in Jehovah, as the King whose viceroy

he was ; but we can see that he had inherited something of the weakness of his father's character, along with an authority greatly controlled by the nobles, and by what we now call a bureaucracy, or government by narrow and worldly-minded officials, who, though unable to take any far-seeing or comprehensive views of the interests of the country, were too firmly seated in power to be dislodged. At the head of these was Shebna, of whom it has been conjectured, from his father's name never being mentioned (as was usual, and as we find done in the case of his fellow-ministers*), and from his being engaged in making a family sepulchre, that he was a man of obscure origin ; while his name, which does not seem to be Hebrew, and by which no one else is called in the Bible, has been supposed to indicate that he was a foreigner. Hezekiah, apparently at the beginning of his reign, 'rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not ;'† and while—as I have already observed—there is no indication that, in so doing, he acted by the advice or with the approval of Isaiah, we know from Isaiah himself that he opposed an alliance with Egypt in support of this revolt, and may infer from his language that it was Shebna and his party who promoted it.‡ The kingdom of Israel had trusted to the like alliance, and was annihilated. And now the Assyrian armies were encamped in the south-west of Judah, apparently on the road to Egypt but expecting and expected to swallow up the little Jewish kingdom easily by the way ; its fortified cities had already fallen, one after another ; 'and Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended ; return from me ; that which thou puttest on me I will bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.' And this tribute Hezekiah sent to him, stripping his palace and the temple of the treasures and ornaments with which, during the previous years of his reign, it had been his glory to have made good the like act of his father Ahaz.§ Whether out of sheer treachery,||

* 2 Kings xviii. 18.

† 2 Kings xviii. 7.

‡ Isaiah xxix. 14 ff., xxx. 1 ff., compared with the prophecy before us.

§ 2 Kings xviii. 14, 15.

|| Isaiah xxxiii. 1, 7, 8 ; on which passage see my comment.

or because he had reason to question the sincerity of Hezekiah's submission (for the communications between Judah and Egypt may have still continued), Sennacherib took the money, and then sent against Jerusalem a detachment from the main army with which he was himself besieging Lachish, an important fortress about thirty-five miles south-west of the capital. The Assyrian generals, however, found the city prepared against a surprise, and the courage of the king and people too high to yield to their persuasions or threats; and the enterprise failed, only to be followed by the overthrow of the main army itself.

Sennacherib's account of these events must be taken with considerable qualifications, as I shall show hereafter.* After his relation of his re-conquest of Philistia, and his battle with the kings of Egypt and Ethiopia, which I have already quoted,† he goes on:—‘ But Hezekiah the Jew submitted not. There were forty-four great cities, walled towns, and little villages without number, against which I fought, subduing their pride and opposing their wrath. By the aid of fire, slaughter, battles, and siege towers, I carried them, I took them: I brought out of them two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty persons, great and small, male and female, horses, asses, mules, camels, sheep and oxen, without number, and I took them for booty. As to him, I shut him up in Jerusalem (Ursalim) the city of his power, like a bird in a cage. I invested and blockaded the surrounding forts: those who came out through the great gate of the city were taken and carried away. I separated from his dominion the cities which I had pillaged, and gave them to Mitinti king of Ashdod, to Padi king of Ekron, and to Ismibil king of Gaza. I diminished his territory. I added to the former tributes and to the payment of their tithes a new tribute in token of my suzerainty, and I imposed it on them. Then the great fear of my majesty terrified this Hezekiah the Jew: the sentinels and the garrison which he had assembled for the defence of Jerusalem, the city of his power, he dismissed. So he submitted himself to pay tribute—thirty talents of gold and

* In chapter xx., where the reader will find a summary of the history of this time.

† Page 195.

eight hundred talents of silver, metals, rubies, pearls, great diamonds (?), bundles of leather, thrones trimmed with leather, skins of sea-calves, sandal-wood, ebony, rich treasures; and also sent me his daughters, the women of his palace, his slaves, male and female, to Nineveh, the city of my sovereignty. He sent his ambassador to present this tribute and to make his submission.*

When Rab-shakeh and the enemy's force actually arrived under the walls the political power had passed from the hands of Shebna to Eliakim, as Isaiah had foretold: not, however, by a literal fulfilment of the prophet's vehement denunciations; but by the former minister being reduced from the first office of lord high treasurer, or lord steward, to that of secretary.† He may have had business talents too useful, or his influence may have been still too great, to permit that complete dismissal which the single-minded prophet, who did not consider it his duty to balance and reconcile conflicting interests and expediciencies, thought, and no doubt rightly, was the moral desert of his character and acts. Probably this very attack on the minister, which reminds one of the words by which Cicero drove out Catiline when too strong to be attacked by more material weapons, may have given the last blow to Shebna's power: he had been hitherto supported by that selfish and time-serving majority of nobles, priests, and people, whom Isaiah (like his contemporaries) is always denouncing, and which was too strong for Hezekiah and the minority of God-fearing men to overthrow, till the present time, when indications that their policy was about to bring utter ruin on the state will have made it suddenly and universally unpopular. The political power of the nobles, the influence of the priesthood and the prophets both with kings and people, and the extent to which these balanced each other and limited the regal authority, are discernible throughout the Hebrew history. David was for many years unable to dismiss Joab his commander-in-chief, though his character and acts were most repugnant to him; 'the sons of Zeruiah were too strong

* Rawlinson, *Outline*, p. 23; Oppert, *Inscriptions*, pp. 44 ff.; Schrader, *Keilinschriften*, pp. 172.

† 2 Kings xviii. 18.

for him ;' and on his death-bed he advised Solomon not to lose, through any scruple, an opportunity for breaking the bondage, if such were offered him by any new delinquency. Rehoboam's insolence to his nobles cost him the greater part of his kingdom. The whole policy, ecclesiastical and civil, of Joash was changed by the influence of the nobles on the death of Jehoiada, the high priest. Isaiah and his contemporaries* describe the wealth and the rapacity, which imply political power, of the aristocracy : and in Jeremiah's narrative† we see that Zedekiah might well complain that 'the king was not he who could do anything against them.' And the independence and courage of the prophets, and the manner in which they awakened a public opinion in favour of truth, and justice, and the fear of Jehovah, in the face of a persecution which often ended in their death, is not less noticeable. We cannot decide how far Hezekiah might have protected Isaiah at this time from direct violence ; but the prophet, who not only openly denounced the policy of Shebna and the other 'scornful men who ruled this people in Jerusalem,' but traced its origin to their irreligion, selfishness, luxury, and oppression of the poor, and declared that God was about to bring them to speedy judgment for these things, must have been a brave man ; for he would know it to be too probable that, if matters came to issue between him and his opponents, 'the king was not he who could do anything against them.'

Eliakim, the son of Hiliah, was no doubt already designated by Hezekiah and the God-fearing minority as the proper successor of Shebna : and Isaiah's prediction that he would be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah, implies that Shebna's character and acts were of the unpaternal kind which we might infer from the previous censure on his pride and luxury, coupled with the like censures on his contemporaries :—those senators and princes who joined house to house and field to field, while they ground the faces of the poor, and justified the wicked for reward ; who called evil good, and

* Amos vi. 1—7 ; Micah iii. 1—3.

† Jeremiah xxxvii. 15 ; xxxviii. 5.

put bitter for sweet, and were prudent in their own sight, but regarded not the work of Jehovah, nor considered the operation of his hands.*

This prophecy, then, was delivered just before the fall of Shebna, and when the open country of Judah, and many of its fortified cities, were in possession of the Assyrians, and they daily expected under the walls of Jerusalem, which was crowded with fugitives from the country round.

If the latter half of verse 2 is to be taken with the former, which speaks of the city as still full of the bustle of peaceful life, it may imply that as yet they have seen no deaths, but of those who died in their beds: if it is to be taken with verse 3, as a part of the picture of impending calamity, it may refer to deaths by famine, and by the pestilence which attacked the city crowded with fugitives from the open country, and of which Hezekiah himself had nearly died. Verse 3 describes the captivity of both princes and people, in the day in which the enemy would break down the walls, and the cries of the inhabitants reach to the mountains. Of these calamities there would have been some anticipation in the case of the cities of Judah already taken by the Assyrians, and the reports of which would have been known in Jerusalem. Elam, as I have already said, includes the provinces of Media and Persia, at this time dependent on Assyria, and supplying Sennacherib with their famous bowmen. Kir,† as is now generally agreed, is the region between the Caucasus and the Caspian, which is marked by the names of the river Cyrus and the province Georgia: though it has been suggested that it may have been that tract of Southern Media where Ptolemy mentions Curene and Carina. Verse 8 describes the alarm and indignation of Judah when, by the taking of her fortresses, and the appearance of an army under the walls of her capital, she is, both in the military and the moral sense of the word, dismantled. It was the grossest insult to tear the veil from the daughter of Zion; but now it was more than an insult, for it revealed to her the

* See their description at length in Isaiah v. and elsewhere.

† 2 Kings xvi. 9; Amos i. 5.

presence and the power of her oppressor. Their eyes open to their danger, and they look to the arms in the arsenal, which took its name from having been built by Solomon of timber from Lebanon : they survey the walls of the citadel, commonly called the 'city of David,' and select houses to be pulled down for materials to repair and fortify the walls with : and they secure water for the inhabitants, and cut it off from the enemy, by stopping or concealing the sources of the springs which they have first conducted into reservoirs within the city.

In order to make these details clearer, let us consider the topography of the city. Towards the south-east part of that ridge of rugged, limestone, table-land, which, with a breadth of from twenty to twenty-five geographical miles, forms the back-bone of southern Palestine, there juts out a broad and elevated promontory, enclosed on the east, south, and south-west by deep ravines ; while on the north and north-west it slopes more gently back into the main table-land. These ravines are the Valleys of Kidron and Ben-Hinnom, and the promontory is the site of Jerusalem.* The promontory itself consists of several lesser hills and undulations, of which the original, and even successive, levels must have been indefinitely altered by the quarryings and abrasions, and the accumulations of earth and rubbish, of ages ; just as has been the case with the hills of Rome, or of London. But they are still more or less distinctly marked out, and especially by two main depressions which, beginning one from the north and the other from the north-west of this promontory, unite in a deep ravine called the Tyropæan Valley, which then runs south to join the Kidron and Ben-Hinnom ravines. Most authorities are agreed that the original city of Jebus was on some part of the western ridge, while there is no question that Ophel was at the south end of the eastern, and that of the Temple was to the north of Ophel on the same ridge. But it is still discussed whether the ancient Zion was on the north of this eastern ridge, or on the south-western hill to which all Christian and local traditions, from the time of Constantine to the present day, give

* Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, vol. i. p. 380 ff.

this name. No biblical or local knowledge, however, makes it possible to reconcile the latter position with the various scriptural notices, and therefore Mr. Fergusson has returned to the uniform declaration of the Talmudical writers, that Zion was on the *north* side of the Temple : and has shown that by assigning this position to it he can clear up all, or almost all, the previously inexplicable difficulties, and give us a coherent topography of the Jerusalem of the Old (and also of the New) Testament.* And the recent local explorations of Captains Wilson and Warren tend to support this view in the main, if they have not finally decided it to be the true one, and though many details still remain obscure and doubtful. Assuming this then to be the true, as it is the only intelligible topography, the results, as far as we need them to illustrate the narrative before us, are as follows :—The city of Jerusalem, properly so called, was distinct from the city of Zion, or of David. The former was the old city of the Jebusites, and its site the western ridge : the latter was a new city which David and Solomon built on the north eastern side of the ravine, and which, when complete, included the citadel of David on the northern brow of Zion, the Temple being to the south ; and the castle of Ophel to the south of that again. The citadel of David, or ‘Strong-hold of Zion,’ will thus have been in the same quarter in which, in successive periods, we find the citadel of the Maccabees and of the Romans, under the names of Acra, Bethzur, and Antonia. It is to be supposed that the military considerations which approved the site in the last cases, would have done so in the first ; and it was on the north, and not on the south, that the main fortress was required, in order to protect the north-western side of the city, which was weak from the nature of the ground. Each of these cities, of Jerusalem and of Zion, would have its own wall ; and their means of communication across the ravine which separated them, was apparently by ‘the stairs that went down from the city of David,’ as in after times by a

* *An Essay on the Ancient Topography of Jerusalem*, by James Fergusson, F.R.A.S., 1847, and Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, article *Jerusalem*. See too *The Bible Atlas*, by Samuel Clark, M.A., 1868, p. 55.

bridge, of which there are still remains. These, then, are 'the Two Walls,' between which Hezekiah made a ditch or aqueduct; and by a gate between which Zedekiah fled, through the 'king's garden,' which was at the south end of the ravine. Before Hezekiah's preparations for the siege, the waters of 'the upper water-course'—or more correctly 'source of the waters'—'of Gihon' (that is the water-head of Kidron) and 'all the fountains without the city,' among which was that of Siloah, overflowed into and formed 'the brook which ran through the midst of the land,' down its natural channel of the Valley of Kidron; but now they were conducted, by extensive engineering operations, for which the Jewish nobles helped to provide the great number of workmen required, and the fame of which was known to later times,* 'straight down to the west side of the city of David,' that is, between the 'Two Walls.' There they seem to have been collected in a new 'reservoir' (made the easier in a ravine) which thus became a substitute for 'the old pool,' which lay without the northern wall; and then the king stopped, that is, buried in such a way as effectually to conceal, the fountains or sources themselves. And a farther supply was obtained from the spring of Siloah, which, as I have already noticed, seems to have been now conducted through the still existing subterranean channel into the same reservoir. This 'reservoir' would then be the larger of the pools of Siloam described by Captain Wilson, and would have received the waters of both Gihon and Siloah: the 'old pool' would be the existing pool near the so-called Tombs of the Kings, and the same as the 'upper pool' of Isaiah vii. 3, xxxvi. 2, and 2 Kings xviii. 17, the aqueduct or conduit of which has been recently found.† Hezekiah, lastly, seems to have built a wall across the northern opening of the ravine, where it widens into less defensible ground; and

* 'He [Hezekiah] fortified his city, and brought in water into the midst thereof: he digged the hard rock with iron, and made wells for waters.'—Eccles. xlviii. 17. Strabo mentions the abundant supply of water among the military advantages of Jerusalem; and Tacitus says that it possessed a perennial fountain with subterranean channels. The rock of which the east ridge consists is honeycombed with cisterns.

† Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article *Gihon*. *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 237 ff. *Quarterly Statement of Palestine Exploration Fund*, April 1872, p. 50.

which was perhaps rebuilt by Manasseh, and then described as 'a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley.' This was the weakest part of the whole ground, as I have before observed ; and the name of the 'camp of the Assyrians,' still surviving in the time of Josephus, probably indicates that Rab-shakeh posted himself here : a tradition from Nebuchadnezzar's siege would have been more likely to give the name of 'Chaldeans ;' but the fact that Titus encamped on the same spot, shows it was the proper place for besiegers in any age.

In the account which the Book of Chronicles gives of these same preparations for standing a siege, it is related that Hezekiah 'gathered the people together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying, Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him ; for there be more with us than with him ; with him is an arm of flesh, but with us is Jehovah our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.' * This was the right language for the king to use ; and the response of the people was no doubt as sincere as loyal and enthusiastic : and their earnestness was deep enough to carry them through the impending crisis. But deeper than that it was not. Isaiah was at the very same time declaring that the people were looking to the approach of the enemy, and to the efficiency of their preparations for defence ; but not to Him who had designed and done all this, both bringing the Assyrian on them to punish their sins, and protecting them from being quite destroyed by him : and though the prophet's preaching might seem not only more gloomy, but less true than the king's cheerful harangue, yet the event—the outward progress of national corruption and degeneracy without any real reformation—justified the former. He did not forget nor omit to assert, at the proper time, that Jehovah had reserved to himself a 'remnant :' it was his unceasing aim to confirm and increase that remnant by his exhortations and warnings : but he

* 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8.

knew that the faith which Jehovah required was not that facile enthusiasm which, alternating with panic, swayed for the time the assemblies in the 'street of the gate of the city.' The vehement hyperbole of these threatenings against the people of Jerusalem, and against Shebna, reminds one of the language of Luther or of Burke: and when contrasted with the actual events, throws much light on the external and accidental characteristics of Hebrew prophecy.

Those critics who, like myself, see no necessity for assuming a literal accomplishment of the threats against Shebna, have hitherto been well content to accept as its sufficient fulfilment, the change of offices found (as we have just noticed) in the Hebrew history of the time: but the mention in Sennacherib's Annals, quoted above, of men 'great and small,' and 'those who came out through the great gate of the city,'* being carried to Nineveh suggests the curious and interesting question whether, after all, there may not have been some correspondence between the facts and the rabbinical traditions that Shebna was carried off by Sennacherib. One of these traditions says that he was seized by Sennacherib when sent on an embassy by Hezekiah; and another that he fled to the Assyrians after an unsuccessful conspiracy to deliver the city to them.

It is quite probable that the 'What hast thou here, and whom hast thou here,' was actually addressed to Shebna, face to face, and within sight of his new sepulchre: and if we follow the topographer quoted above, we shall believe that the Jewish forum, in which Isaiah was likely enough to have delivered the earlier part of this harangue, was in the city of Zion, and, therefore, close upon the city burying-grounds, which were just without the wall, and the more honourable sepulchres in which were actually hewn out in the north and east faces of Zion itself. The mention of the height of Shebna's new tomb, is supposed to indicate his extreme pretension to pomp and dignity, as the reader will see more at large in Lowth's note. The ancients, not

* Sir Henry Rawlinson reads 'officers of his [Hezekiah's] palace,' where M. Oppert has 'women of his palace.'

excepting the Jews, attached much more importance than we do to every thing connected with the burial of the dead, because they were so much less able to distinguish the human person from the earthly body, or to apprehend the substantial reality of the former apart from the latter. Our burials symbolize, and express our faith in, immortality and a resurrection; but the Jews shared more or less the common feeling of antiquity that there was some real connection between a man's due obsequies and his state after death. Still their faith, though obscure, was in the main spiritual and elevating, when held as it was by David, Hezekiah, or Job. But the worldly and sense-bound man then, as, indeed, he does now, contemplated the costly preparations for his burial, and for the preservation of his embalmed and entombed body, as the last possible act of regard for that sensual existence which he alone cared for. It was but the consistent maintenance to the last of his sensual creed—'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'

The office of Shebna, who was 'over the house,' was that which we find held by Jotham when his father king Uzziah was incapacitated by disease,* and must have been that of the king's first minister. Of this office Shebna shall be deprived, and it shall be given—as in fact it was given shortly after—to Eliakim, who is recognized by Isaiah as the true servant of Jehovah. Some of the comments on verses 24 and 25 provoke our wonder how any one can have read through twenty-two chapters of Isaiah and yet be puzzled by the transfer of the image of the nail from Eliakim in the former, to Shebna in the latter, verse; or can think that the difficulty is cleared up by taking the poetical picture of the honour which would redound to Eliakim's whole family from his just and able administration, for a description of excessive nepotism which should be at last punished by a fate like his predecessor's.

Here, as indeed often before, we get much light on Isaiah's times and the meaning of his discourses by a comparison with the accounts of like national conditions in modern times, and especially those which thoughtful suf-

* 2 Chron. xxvi. 21.

ferers and actors during the European war of the last generation have given us. Thus Niebuhr* illustrates Isaiah (while Isaiah illustrates him by announcing the laws which govern the new as well as the old events) in his account of 'that dull comfortable existence which was described as the golden age of thirty years ago;' of 'the aimless striving after something beyond' which then arose, and 'which, combined with the universal effeminacy, led to the miserable results' which they all experienced as their subsequent condition:—of 'the dissolution of all civil bonds and institutions being completed:' of 'ninetenths of the landowners' (which in Germany includes the cultivators) 'both in town and country ruined, yet who must still go on paying contributions—it cannot be otherwise till they are cut down to the bone;' while 'many, many thousands of our youths, of our men, are shedding their blood, are pining away their lives in hospitals, or in want and wretchedness:'—of 'an innocent country' (Holstein) 'abandoned to pillage, reduced to misery,' apparently to be 'deliberately turned into a desert by an unprincipled policy and rapacity,' and its prosperity 'fruitlessly destroyed, like some unhappy victim, whose fate it has been to experience only those sorrows which humiliate and enfeeble, and has no opportunity to make those sacrifices, by which individuals and nations are purified and exalted:'—of 'life dragged along as a weary burden:'—of 'armies entrusted to boys, because they are the sons of princes; divisions to generals who have outlived captivity,'—while the statesman 'who feels in himself that he could counsel and lead, remains in the background, not only because of a thousand miserable considerations, but because the hour of dissolution is not yet come, in which he would press forward:'—of the error of fancying that 'the general misfortunes and the approaching danger have produced a grave and solemn tone at the Court and seat of government;' where 'all amusements go on just as usual: people look on the war as a subject of conversation, find fault with the English, abuse the Russians, comfort themselves with saying that the French are not so bad,' &c., &c. and

* *Life and Letters*, translated by Miss Winkworth.

'there is an everlasting talk, mostly without the slightest comprehension of the matter,' among these courtiers and rulers, while men like Niebuhr must 'listen and not speak out their whole mind,' however 'their blood may boil with indignation : '—of 'the senseless prating of those who talked of desperate resolves as of a tragedy : '—of the 'untiring malice and inexhaustible wickedness' of the political intriguers, 'who have plunged this unhappy country into ruin,' while 'all true help is shamefully cast aside ;' the utter 'blindness of the king which allowed the progress of political disunion' to proceed to such extremity ; the 'lasting hindrance to all comprehensive undertakings arising from the mediocrity and baseness that can scarcely even now be dislodged from their present position of power ;' and 'the vanity of the idea that a better day *must* follow the night of incapacity and little-mindedness : '—of the 'bitter grief and comfortless affliction' which prompts him 'constantly to ask himself whether we are really living in the same age of the world that we did formerly, or whether all before us is not, as it seems to our eyes, chaos and night, a universal destruction of all that now exists.' He feels, too deeply to be inclined to *say* much about it, that 'the dreadful decision of a great judgment-day of the world is at hand : '—'Now must begin either universal death and putrefaction, or the heavings of a new life : but where are its germs : '—'this is the time when the elect are proved ; he who has endured to the end, will have a bright evening to his life, but for the present, happy . . . are they who have learnt in other ways and former times to bear the cross : '—he 'begins to cherish the encouraging belief that many hearts have grown stronger and purer through danger and suffering, and that on all sides there lives a spirit, though straitened and repressed, whose power must increase : '—though it is so much 'the most probable that they will have to endure the double sorrow of seeing this flame which has been secretly growing more intense, extinguished by oppression,' that he can only 'almost believe that if God would take pity on them, they might, though with bitter grief and pain, attain to something much better

than their former state,' yet he urges his friend to 'become the advocate among others of that which as yet scarcely begins to stir in the bosom of night, but of which the existence is certain: let them not regard what still exists on the surface of things, and is the tottering wreck of an age gone by:—the patriot may see 'the many elements of good striving for life,—of a better spirit than existed in happier time;' the Christian may 'trust that a Comforter will come, a new Light when he least expects it,' and that 'all the sorrow of this era will lead on towards truth if we are only willing.' And when 'deliverance is offered to them by the manifest and wonderful providence of God,' who has 'smitten' the oppressor 'with blindness;' there is first the recognition that this deliverance has come 'after God has chastened us sufficiently for our deep-rooted sins,' and that unless it finds each of us ready to devote his life to its attainment, we cannot be saved;—and then we have the picture of this requisite moral and religious acceptance of their salvation, 'the ground cleared and ready to bear fruit,' 'love dwelling in every heart, and all ready to welcome whatever was noble and good,' and 'good will and good ideas ripening universally with good deeds:—and if the 'morality,' 'patience,' 'discipline,' 'humanity,' which makes us as well as Niebuhr 'feel a true reverence' for 'an army so pure,' were once and for the first time, 'during the whole war,' broken down by 'the great privations they had to suffer' after the battle of Laons,—the young officer who reports it 'could not sleep for grief;' the field-preachers 'took for their text, What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, and exhorted the men to return to the patience and honesty they had shown till lately; the brave fellows wept bitterly, and promised with a loud voice to do so; while General York reminded them of the sacredness of their vow . . . that they ought to be as *good* as they were brave . . . ordered one man to step forward from each company . . . and took their hand upon it that they would suffer anything rather than be guilty of any excesses.' We may make such abatements as we think cool judgment demands from the glowing colours of the

patriotic picture ; its value as an illustration of Isaiah will not be diminished.

Zschokke thus moralizes on the French occupation of Switzerland :—‘ There are times—the Divine Providence has so ordained it—there are times when it is needful that the iron rod of doom should be stretched forth to arouse the nations of the earth from their senseless brooding over material interests and sensual wants ; and to save them from the gradual brutalization into which they are frozen by the influence of forms no longer vital ; or from the degradation to mere mechanical motion and existence. National wanderings, crusades, and civil wars, have ultimately left behind them greater blessings than those which they destroyed. There must be times of death and destruction, to make room for new life. The devouring selfishness of the powerful would crush the weaker part of the human family, and cripple with its impious weapons the free wings of the soul, if from time to time the thunder-voice of a higher Will than man’s did not proclaim, as of old, through the storm-clouds of Sinai, the voice of Jehovah ; ‘ Thou shalt have none other gods than me ! ’ Such were the thoughts that chiefly occupied me as I travelled with Tscharner towards Aarau.’*

* Zschokke’s *Autobiography*, English Translation, p. 71. In Tholuck’s preface to his *Commentary on the Romans* (if I remember rightly), and in a paper of Krummacher’s in the *Reports of the Evangelical Alliance*, there are like descriptions of the moral and religious effects of the war of freedom on the people and the king of Prussia.

The above pages were written in 1852. Since then there have been great wars in America and Europe full of the like moral significance. 1873.

CHAPTER XVII.

ISAIAH XXIII.—THE PHŒNICIANS — HISTORICAL NOTICES — THEIR TRADE — CARRIERS OF PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS — RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. — THE TYRIAN HERCULES — THEIR RELIGION POLITICAL, NOT NATURAL. — SIEGE OF THE ISLAND-TYRE BY SHALMANESER — BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR — BY ALEXANDER — PRESENT STATE. — AUTHORSHIP OF THE PROPHECY. — THE DISPENSER OF CROWNS. — THE QUEEN OF CITIES DISHONoured. — TYRE FORGOTTEN SEVENTY YEARS — SHALL SING AS AN HARLOT.

THE fertile and well-watered plain which undulates from the foot of Lebanon to the sea, along the north-west coast of Palestine, was the land of the people called Sidonians by the Hebrews and by Homer, but Phœnicians by the later Greeks and the Romans. Sidon (the Fishery) was the most ancient of their cities: the Book of Joshua calls it ‘the great,’ while it gives the epithet of ‘strong’ to Tyre, of which the tradition was, that it was founded 240 years before the building of Solomon’s Temple, by fugitives from Sidon, then besieged by the king of Ascalon. Successive colonies filled the plain ‘with great and fair cities,’ from Tyre to Aradus, each of which seems to have had its own king, or judge, though in the time of David and thenceforward we find Tyre, and the king of Tyre, in apparent superiority over the whole people. They were a Canaanitish race; and their land—first promised to Zebulun—was allotted to Asher,* to whom, however, it remained (as Gesenius elsewhere says) an inheritance *in partibus infidelium*; for in the days of the Judges, the Sidonians not only continued to dwell ‘careless, quiet, and secure,’ but became the oppressors of the Israelites.† Lebanon supplied timber for the Sidonian ships, near Sarepta were iron and copper mines, the sea yielded them the shells and the sand with which to make their purple

* Genesis xlix. 13; Joshua xix. 28, 29. † Judges xviii. 7; x. 12.

dye and their glass, and their women wove the variegated robes of which Homer speaks : and thus they began that trade which in after times exchanged the tin of Britain, and the amber of Prussia, with the gold, the apes, the ebony, and the ivory of India, and of which Ezekiel has so gorgeously described all the details, as well as the wealth, luxury, and power of which it was the source.* By land their trade was conducted to a great extent (as we have before seen) by the Arab caravans ; by sea, their own ships carried them to Egypt, Greece, Italy, Sicily, Malta, Carthage, Spain, and perhaps even to America ; while the navy created by Solomon with the help of their shipwrights and sailors, gave them a water communication with Arabia and India, from the port of Elath at the head of the north-east gulf of the Red Sea.

The creation of this Hebrew navy was one of the fruits of the alliance and friendship of David and Solomon with Hiram, king of Tyre : he also supplied them with materials and artificers for building the Temple, palaces, and other public works ; and the rapid growth of the national wealth and luxury of Israel from this period, shows that their commercial intercourse with Tyre must have been considerable.† Probably then, as in the times of Ezekiel, they supplied the Tyrian markets with wheat, honey, oil, and balm ; and we may believe that a considerable part of the caravan traffic from Arabia would pass through their country, for the sake of the security afforded by a settled and civilized government. And thus, while Israel remained an agricultural country, as the whole scope of its constitution and policy required, it enjoyed as large a share of the benefits of commerce as was compatible with the main historical ends for which the nation existed :—or, as Isaiah expresses it in the chapter before us, ‘The merchandise of Tyre was for them that dwelt before Jehovah, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.’ Nor was Phœnicia’s debt to Israel less, or less characteristic : when a positive recognition of facts shall have superseded alike the opposite theories which—with super-

* Ezekiel xxvii.

† 2 Samuel v. 11 ; 1 Kings ix. 10—14, 26—28 ; x. 11—29.

stitious reverence, or with scoffing sciolism—have conspired to exclude the Hebrew nation from its place in universal history, it will be plain that it was not for nothing that Phœnicia came in contact with a people whose institutions were based on a faith in family life, and in laws upheld by a righteous LORD ; and that, at the time when Jewish life was embodied by David and Solomon in the forms in which it would be most easily intelligible to foreigners, there should have been a Hiram capable of appreciating their personal and political character. It was after this that Phœnicia became the carrier of the germs and maxims of politics and philosophy to Europe : and her people knew their calling too well not to get these, like other things, from the best market ; though, like traders, they were content to hand them over to their customers, keeping little of them for themselves.*

We notice in Ezekiel's list, 'the persons of men,' brought from Javan (or Ionia), to the Tyrian market : and Isaiah's contemporaries, Amos and Joel, complain that the Tyrians sold Hebrew slaves, 'the sons of Judah and Jerusalem,' to the Edomites and the Greeks, notwithstanding the alliance and friendship which should have subsisted between the two nations ;† of which slaves, as well as of the 'gold and silver, and precious goodly things' of the Israelites, they had possessed themselves by purchase from the Assyrian, or other licentious soldiery, who found in the Tyrians the shrewd and unprincipled traders who are always at hand to buy such plunder. To these complaints of the breaches of the 'brotherly covenant' and friendly alliance between the two nations, the prophets had in all ages to add their resistance to the opposite abuse of that friendship, which introduced the worship of the Sidonian Astarte and Baal into Israel, and of which Solomon's apostasy, and the establishment of the priesthood of Baal by Jezebel the wife of Ahab, and daughter of Ethbaal king of Tyre, were but instances, though the most important ones.

* See Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, § 'Phœnicians,' 1st and 2nd editions.

† Amos i. 9, 10 ; Joel iii. 4—6.

Melicartha, or Hercules—the Phœnician and Greek equivalents, according to an inscription from Malta—was the god whose temple Herodotus went to Tyre to see, and found with its ‘two pillars, one of gold and the other of emerald, both shining exceedingly at night,’ and its rich offerings, which included (as we know from other accounts) those of the Phœnician colonies, in all of which the same god was worshipped. Melicartha means ‘king of the city,’ and even Hercules is by some derived from a Hebrew word for ‘the Trader;’ and it is probable that he is the same as Baal, which was the general Phœnician name for God.

Baal is constantly coupled with Astarte; and the more philosophical opinion* is that this national god and goddess were the Lord and Lady of Phœnicia, rather than the sun and moon:—for to a people full of political life the sun and moon would have been themselves representatives, while a divine king and queen were the realities. And if so, the habitual inclination of the Israelites, an essentially political people, for this worship becomes the more easily understood. A worship of nature—of cats and dogs—like that of Egypt, could have had little attraction for them; but this of the Sidonians offered to supply their craving for a national and political creed, yet without the holiness and righteousness of heart and life, which the worship of the LORD of Abraham and of David required them to maintain by an habitual sacrifice of their sensual and worldly nature.

Of the colonies or commercial settlements of the Phœnicians, the prophecy before us mentions two—Tarshish and Chittim. Tarshish, or Tartessus, was a city and port between the two mouths of the Bœtis, or Guadalquiver, in Spain, and the oldest of the Tyrian factories: and in this name, according to Gesenius, the later Phœnician settlements of Gades and Carthage were afterwards included, both by the Hebrew and the classical writers. Chittim, as the same authority shows, is Cyprus, in the south of which island was the Phœnician settlement of Citium, in the ruins of which, still called Chiti, Pococke found Phœnician inscriptions;—but, as in the case of Tarshish, the

* Maurice's *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, v. 8.

name was extended, and in later times includes the other islands and coasts of the Mediterranean.

Sidon (for a full topography and history of which, as well as of Tyre, I may refer the reader to Dr. Robinson's *Biblical Researches in Palestine*) is still a city of five or six thousand inhabitants, in the midst of well-watered gardens and orchards—'the flowery Sidon dwelling by the streams of the graceful Bostrenus'*—with some trade in silk, cotton, and nutgalls. Of 'Old Tyre,' the site is uncertain, as there are no remains to mark it: the Island-Tyre—where, in later times at least, was the chief city—seems to have been originally a ledge of rocks, which the gathering sand formed into a narrow island less than a mile long, and not half a mile from the main land: according to Josephus, it was already occupied by the Tyrians in the time of Hiram, the friend of Solomon. In the reign of Elulæus king of Tyre (who reigned thirty-six years, and was contemporary with Hezekiah) Cyprus rebelled; and at that time the king of Assyria, who is said to have been called in by the city of Gath to protect it against Elulæus, invaded Phœnicia; and on the submission of Sidon, Acre, Old Tyre, and other towns, he obtained from them a fleet with which to attack the Island-Tyre. But the Tyrians made peace with Cyprus, defeated the Assyrians at sea, and successfully withstood a blockade of five years, in which, however, they suffered much from the cutting off of the aqueducts—of which the traveller still finds, if not the remains, which may be all later, yet the large and fine rushing streams, at the village named 'Well-head.'† I have noticed before that Sargon claims to have taken Tyre (I suppose Old Tyre), and that a monument of the same king has been found in Cyprus, and is now in the Berlin museum. And Sennacherib, at the beginning of his third campaign, of which I have already quoted some of the later events, proceeded to Phœnicia when Luliya (Elulæus), 'king of Sidon,' fled at his approach, and he replaced him by Ithobal, on whom he imposed the

* Dionysius Periegetes, O. T. D. 905, quoted by Robinson.

† Josephus, *Ant.* ix. 14, 2. Josephus quotes from Menander's Greek translation of the Tyrian Archives; and he adds that the Assyrian king was Salmanasar.

usual tribute, after the whole country, including Tyre, had been reduced to submission. There the kings of the west—among whom he names Mittinti of Ashdod, Puduil of Ammon, Kamosnadab of Moab, and Melikram of Edom—repaired to his presence, and brought him their accustomed tribute, and kissed his feet.* Asurhaddon gives the king of Tyre in a long list of his tributaries, among whom appears the name of Manasseh of Judah. Under Ithobal II. Tyre was again besieged for thirteen years by Nebuchadnezzar, and the fortress apparently again proved impregnable,† though the nation seems nevertheless to have fallen under the Babylonian, as afterwards under the Persian, yoke: and ‘they of Tyre and Sidon’ brought cedar from Lebanon to the port of Joppa, for rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem, in obedience to the grant of Cyrus.‡ A third siege of Tyre by Alexander the Great (about 332 B.C.), ended with the reduction of the Island-Tyre, after seven months of desperate struggle on both sides, during which Alexander built a mound or causeway from the mainland to the island. To supply materials for this, and the other works of the besiegers, Old Tyre was razed, never to be rebuilt; but ‘the fortress of the sea,’ and its trade, recovered both from this blow, and from that which the same conqueror gave them by building Alexandria. After Alexander’s death it fell to the Seleucidæ, many of whose Tyrian coins, with Greek and Phœnician inscriptions, are extant. In the time of Strabo, and under the Roman dominion, it was rich and flourishing, with its commerce and purple-dyeing trade; with two harbours (formed by Alexander’s mole which had made the island a peninsula), of which however only one, called the Egyptian, was open; and with remarkably lofty houses, such as could not be seen in Rome itself. Tyre became Christian early,§ and in the days of Jerome was still ‘a very fair and noble city,’ and traded ‘with almost all the world.’ It was an archbishopric under the

* Rawlinson, *Outline*, pp. 20, 23; Oppert, *Inscriptions*, pp. 43, 44; Schrader, *Keilinschriften*, p. 174. Then follows the passage I have already quoted above, p. 194.

† I certainly think with Gesenius, that this is the fair conclusion to draw from Ezekiel xxix. 18, 19, as well as from Jerome’s admission that no Greek or Phœnician history mentioned the capture.

‡ Ezra iii. 7.

§ Acts xxi. 4.

patriarchate of Jerusalem, with fourteen bishoprics under it. Taken by the Saracens in 639; recovered by the Christians in 1124; in 1280, conquered by the Mamelukes; and taken from them by the Turks, in 1516; it then sank into a decay which corresponded literally with Ezekiel's denunciations, when, at the end of the seventeenth century, Maundrell found not one entire house, but only a few fishermen harbouring themselves in the vaults. Since then it has somewhat rallied, and Dr. Robinson found it a town of about 3,000 inhabitants, with some poor trade in tobacco, cotton, and wood. Alexander's causeway has become a sand-bank half a mile wide; the ruins of the large cathedral are filled with mean hovels; and if anything remains of the Tyre of Isaiah, it is the columns of red and gray granite which strew the ragged western shore of the rock, 'from one end to the other, along the edge of the water and in the water.'

The discussions as to the genuineness of this prophecy again test the value of the argument from style and diction. Some critics of the new school are in favour of the old orthodox explanation of the prophecy as a prediction of the taking of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, ascribe it to a contemporary writer, and find clear indications of the late date in the style. Others, as Gesenius, Knobel, and Cheyne, connect the prophecy—as Grotius did—with the siege by Shalmaneser, and see nothing in the style to prevent their attributing it to Isaiah. And Ewald infers from the style that it may be the production of a younger contemporary and disciple of Isaiah.

There is, in truth, no stronger evidence that Tyre was taken in the days of Nebuchadnezzar than in those of Isaiah. But I persuade myself that the reader agrees that we are not to adopt an *a-priori* theory, as to the nature of prophecy and its fulfilment, and cut our facts to fit it; but that we are to let the facts tell their own story, and be sure that whatever we can read of this will be the truth, all commentators and critics notwithstanding. And if we have, on the one hand, found the book so replete with political, social, and personal wisdom as to throw a clear light not only on the history of Isaiah's own time but

on that of all other times and nations including our own—so that when we read of Babylon or Jerusalem, of Ahaz or Sennacherib, we perceive ourselves studying the universal propositions of a science by the help of a diagram : yet, on the other hand, we have found, mixed up with minute and interesting correspondences between details in the prophecies and in history, discrepancies and non-fulfilments of predictions at least as marked. Thus, in the last prophecy—the denunciation of Shebna and the worldly men of Jerusalem—Isaiah predicts that the city shall be taken by assault,* and both princes and people carried into captivity ; and that in particular this shall be the fate of Shebna, in order to make way for his successor Eliakim : and if the accuracy of the reading of the Assyrian Inscription (quoted in the last chapter) is finally established, and we then claim a right to apply its terms to the fulfilment of the prediction as to Shebna and the nobles, it remains certain that, instead of the city being taken, Isaiah himself soon after promised, with a confidence which the event justified, that the Assyrian should not even attempt the siege.† In like manner Isaiah had predicted the approach of the invaders from the north, when they should appear under the walls of Jerusalem,‡ whereas, as far as we know, they only came from the south-west ; though the other part of the prophecy, that they should then be cut off with a terrible crash, was fulfilled with striking accuracy. So the details as to the fate of Babylon,—the city taken during a feast by the Medes, cruel, regardless of gold, and riding two and two, with a cavalry of asses and camels as well as horses ; and the Arab in our own day, still fearing the satyrs if he pitches his tent in its ruins for a single night,—appear by the side of the threat that ‘her time was near to come,’ and the fact that centuries intervened before its accomplishment even began.

What then ? If we cannot prove that Isaiah was inspired, by showing that he could predict future events more infallibly than the ancient oracles, or the mediæval or modern astrologers or mesmerists, was he not inspired ?

* Isaiah xxii. 3—5.

† Isaiah x. 28—34.

‡ Isaiah xxxvii. 33—35.

and are his writings not a part of God's Revelation? Let the reader turn to the book itself; and though he may not find these infallible predictions—which he may be sure he would have found, if they had been essential to God's communication of himself to man—yet he will find, reflected in each page, 'the light of that Holy Spirit, which in all ages has taught, and now teaches, the hearts of his faithful people, and so grants them to have a right judgment in all things, and to rejoice evermore in his holy comfort;' * and he will find that, as the same light in his own heart brings him into sympathy and intelligence with the meaning of what is recorded in those pages, they do reveal to him something of God's character and mind, and of his designs and dealings with man, which neither he, nor any one else, has known, except by their means. If the miraculous prediction were there, it would be but the sign: but we have the Inspiration and the Revelation themselves, superseding all signs.

If, then, we take the prophecy before us to be of the same kind as those which have preceded it, our historical remains are quite sufficient to bring Tyre into contemporary connection with Isaiah, and quite sufficient to preserve that connection onward through successive ages, without our demanding any proof that either Shalmaneser, or Nebuchadnezzar, did, or did not, take the city, and without being anxious for the confirmation of the reading of Sennacherib's account of his campaign, much as it is to the purpose.

Isaiah sees the city and country of Tyre in the power of the enemy, and tells the fleets home-bound from the western colonies, that they will learn, when they are off Cyprus, that their own harbours and hearths are desolate. The inhabitants of the Island-Rock are silenced, by the ruin of its merchants who made Egypt its never-failing granary—barren rock as it was—by making it a mart of nations. 'The Black' (Sihor) was the Greek and Latin, as well as the Hebrew, name for the Nile, with its fertilizing black mud; and we notice Isaiah's wonted poetic taste in minute points, in calling the Egyptian harvest 'the harvest

of the river,' and not of the earth. His next image is bold and grand ; he calls the nation of sailors whose dwellings were their ships, and their chief city an island, 'the sea ;' explaining (lest it should be too bold) that he means the 'stronghold of the sea.' It is doubted whether verse 5 means that when the tidings reach Egypt, the Egyptians will be grieved at the ruin of their great market, and terrified at the prospect of the advance of the Assyrians against themselves, after this, their northern ally, has fallen ; or, that the alarm in Phœnicia, or among the nations generally, will be as great as when on some former occasion—whether the fall of No-Ammon lately, or even the destruction of Pharaoh at the Red Sea—the like news was heard of Egypt, famous to the world, and of which the prosperity was so important to the Tyrian commerce. Some modern commentators translate the last clause of verse 7 'whose feet were ever carrying her far off to sojourn,'—understanding it to refer to the trading and colonizing habits of the Tyrians ; but there is equal authority for retaining the Authorized Version, of which the meaning is that the inhabitants of the ancient and joyous city shall be carried into captivity.

Herodotus and Strabo speak of kings in the smaller Phœnician cities, as well as in the colonies of Tartessus, Citium, and Carthage ; and we need not go from England to Genoa or Venice, with their doges and senates, their Kings of Corsica and Greek dependencies, for examples of a nation of merchants who were princes and dispensers of crowns :—we need only look at the 'Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies,' extending their rule over a great continent, and there setting up and pulling down kings and emperors at their will. Tyre (like other nations) was noted for the severity with which she ruled her dependencies ; but now their bonds are loosed, and the prophet tells Tarshish, which, with its natives working as slaves in the Spanish silver mines, may have been the hardest treated of all, that she is free as the Nile, the river that least regards any bounds, to wander at her own sweet will.* And the proud queen of cities herself, she

* 'The river wandering at its own sweet will.'—WORDSWORTH.

who so long sat in glory, rejoicing in her wealth and power, and in that antiquity of which the Phœnicians were so proud, shall fly, a dishonoured woman, and on foot, for refuge to her colonies—to Tarshish or to Chittim—but even there shall find no rest. For the enemy may pursue her, and the colony may retaliate for its past wrongs, of which, in fact, we see an instance at the date of this prophecy, when Cyprus and the cities of Phœnicia assisted Shalmaneser in the siege of Tyre, as has been mentioned above.

The word translated ‘merchant’ in verses 8 and 11, is ‘Canaan’ in the Hebrew; which Gesenius illustrates by the like use of Chaldean for Astrologer, and of Jew, Swiss, Savoyard, and Italian, to indicate various modern callings: at the same time he observes that it is not unlikely that the name Canaan may, according to its etymology, mean the land, or people, of traders.

It is the LORD of hosts, whose counsels bring this ruin upon Tyre; and his instruments are the Chaldeans, at this time vassals and auxiliaries of the Assyrians. The Chaldeans may, or may not have been specially employed by Shalmaneser or Sennacherib in the siege of Tyre; they no doubt served in his armies, as the tribes of Elam and Media did. This mention of the Chaldeans is analogous to that of Elam and Kir in the last chapter; and there is no more necessity in the one case, than in the other, for supposing that the prophet’s phraseology must, if taken without prejudice, indicate the nation chiefly interested in the war, and not a dependent people who were serving as auxiliaries. The vexed question whether the translation of this verse which I have followed is the true one, I can throw no new light upon. The student will find it fully discussed by Cheyne, Delitzsch, Knobel, and Gesenius, and will judge for himself of the value of Ewald’s conjectural emendation of כְּשֵׁדִים for כְּבָעֲנִים.

Tyre shall be forgotten ‘seventy years, like the days of one king;’—a Hebrew idiom, obscure to us, though probably plain enough to Isaiah’s hearers; but of which the most probable sense is, that the round number here, as elsewhere, indicates an indefinite, though considerable

time, and that the prophet either farther limits this by a phrase equivalent to 'for about a whole generation,' or else implies that the seventy years—the long time of oblivion—shall be as monotonous, and perhaps as short to look back upon, as those of a single reign. 'The days of a king,' the representative of a nation, seems fitter to express 'for a generation' than 'the days of a man' would have been: and we may compare the phrase with 'the days of a hireling,' in chapters xvi. 14, xxi. 16. At the end of this time, Jehovah will visit Tyre: the old alliance, 'the brotherly covenant,' shall be renewed with Israel, and Tyre shall share with the other nations of the earth the blessings which Isaiah promises to them all in turn, when they shall have come, through sufferings, to the knowledge of the God of Israel. Then Israel will have a part in the worldly prosperity of Tyre, as Tyre in her spiritual. This restoration of Tyre is foretold by a strange though expressive image:—at the end of seventy years Tyre shall again play the harlot with all the nations of the earth: and her gains shall be holiness to Jehovah. The harlot* converts into a matter of traffic what should be a sacred relationship: so trade brings men together merely as buyers and sellers, not as brethren; and consequently rapidly degenerates from self-interest into selfishness, unless it be perpetually counter-balanced by other and nobler aims in the man. The Hebrew lawgivers and prophets saw that, in their times, and for their nation, such counterpoises could not be made effectual, and therefore discouraged commerce itself: and the contemptuous image of the harlot implies this feeling here, though we have at the same time the recognition that trade is not essentially evil in the declaration that its gains shall be dedicated to Jehovah. The Mosaic law expressly forbids the offering to Jehovah the gains of a harlot, and this may tell us that Isaiah has here laid aside his illustration, as poets and orators do, as soon as the momentary purpose is served, though to the perplexity of their prosaic commen-

* Harlot is 'hire-lot,' and originally synonymous with 'hireling.' Chaucer says of the 'Sompnour,' or servant of the ecclesiastical court,

'He was a gentle harlot, and a kind.'

tators. The translation—‘it shall be to Tyre as the song of the harlot,’ and the explanation that verse 16 is not Isaiah’s address to Tyre, but an extract from some popular song of the day called ‘the harlot’s song,’ is preferred by most modern translators. But such criticism seems to me somewhat fanciful.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ISAIAH XXIV.—XXVII.—UTTER DESOLATION OF JUDAH—ACTUALLY CAUSED BY THE ASSYRIAN ARMIES.—NATIONAL COVENANT BROKEN BY AHAZ—HE SHUTS THE TEMPLE.—GOD'S COUNSELS OF OLD.—MOAB PUT FOR ASSYRIA.—PATIENCE IN NATIONAL CALAMITIES.—THE WIFE DIVORCED, AND TAKEN BACK.—THE SILVER TRUMPET SOUNDED.—EXPANSION OF ISAIAH'S VIEWS.

ISAIAH xxiv. to xxvii. :—It is agreed that these chapters form a continuous discourse. The older controversy as to its subject, has naturally produced the modern one—in which the rationalists differ among themselves as well as from the orthodox—as to its date and author. I say naturally, because there is no more frequent, I might almost say constant, phenomena in Biblical criticism than this, that the reaction against the orthodox interpretations makes it impossible for the student who is under its influence simply to examine the text as it is: he must find some explanation which shall not merely explain the text but shall also be as strong and hostile a protest as possible against the orthodox interpretation. But I would ask the reader who has accompanied me thus far, still to adhere to the method which has served us hitherto, taking the text as it stands, and considering that Isaiah is, as usual, setting forth—forth-telling rather than foretelling—universal laws, with a special (and to us chiefly illustrative) application to his own times.

The contents agree well with the date which is indicated by the place of the prophecy in the book :—namely, about the time that Sennacherib was besieging Lachish or Libnah.* Samaria, which fell into the power of the Assyrians in the sixth year of Hezekiah, and from that time became available as one of their military posts and bases of operation, was about thirty miles from Jerusalem.

* See below, chapter xx.

So were Lachish and Libnah ; and therefore we have only to remember the extent of ground that a large army covers, and the way in which even modern Christian armies, and much more those of ancient barbarians, sweep, and always used to sweep, whole countries with ' the besom of destruction,' to understand that Isaiah's picture of what he and his fellow citizens were seeing around them, and daily expecting, is no exaggeration of reality. Facts, at such times, go beyond the strongest imagination. And we shall have a more accurate conception of the state of things, if we remember that this last invasion of Sennacherib came upon a people already exhausted by the repeated calamities which, from the end of the reign of Jotham, had fallen on them from every quarter. We may here look back with advantage to chapter i., which, whatever its date, describes precisely the condition of Judea and Jerusalem, about the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign.

The Hebrew employs the same word for ' earth ' and ' land,' and a translation will best approach this poetic indefiniteness, by giving sometimes one, and sometimes the other. I might make a like remark as to the interchange of the perfect and imperfect tenses ; but I hope the reader has already sufficiently realized this characteristic, to find it a help rather than a hindrance to his enjoyment and appreciation of the Hebrew seers.

Jehovah is come to judge his people. Ahaz shut up the temple, and altogether changed the national worship for idolatry : and though this public and open ' transgression of the laws, change of the ordinance, and breach of the covenant ' with the LORD of the nation, was publicly atoned for by Hezekiah, yet there was but too much evidence that the greater part of the people were still, as to heart and faith, better represented by Ahaz than by his pious son and successor : and therefore Jehovah was ' turning upside down ' the whole country—man and beast, cultivated fields and walled cities, political order and social relations—emptying out and scattering its contents, as if it were a bottle, or other vessel. The prophet sees Jerusalem in confusion, taken by assault, and the people in voluntary exile or in captivity.

But from the beginning it was a part of his office to preach that 'a remnant should return;' and (whether alluding or not to any passing event we cannot now say) he sees this remnant, brought through suffering to the knowledge of Jehovah, and raising songs of praise to him in the various lands in which they are scattered. Their lot seems to him even better than his own and that of his countrymen at home; for at home the spoiler and the 'treacherous dealer' are upon them, they are hunted from one refuge to another, and the windows of heaven are opened as in the days of Noah, and the foundations of the earth shaken as with a universal earthquake:—'Broken, all broken is the earth; shattered, all shattered is the earth; the earth doth quake, doth quake exceedingly; the earth doth reel, doth reel, like a drunken man, and swayeth to and fro like a hammock.'—Such is the more literal rendering; the verbs (as in verse 3) are repeated in the intensive form, in the Hebrew; and I do not see that its wild force is not admissible into an English version. The hammock (the same word as in chap. i. 8) is still used throughout the East by the night-watchers of vineyards.

Most commentators understand 'the host of the high ones on high' in verse 21 to be angels good or bad, or even those angelic princes represented in the book of Daniel as the lords of the several nations: but it seems simpler to take the words in their natural connection with the 'moon' and the 'sun' in the 23rd verse, and not to attempt to define and fix the image more than the prophet himself has done. Some thought of spiritual powers supporting the kings of the earth, there probably is here as in the words of Jeremiah—'Behold I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh and Egypt with their gods and their kings; '* or as when Isaiah himself says—'The idols are moved at his presence; †—but I see no reason for finding here the later demonology of the Jews.

In that day Jehovah will come to judge both the host of heaven and the kings of the earth who have been the instruments of his righteous judgments: they shall be

* Chap. xlvi. 25.

† Chap. xix. 1.

visited first with punishment, and afterwards with pardon, while the LORD of hosts shall establish his kingdom in Zion, and call his servants—the Hezekiahs, Eliakims, Isaiahs, and the body of faithful and holy men, in that as in every other age—to be his senators, his council and fellow-workers in his glorious reign.

The prophet speaks, or writes, in the actual, and apparently increasing, desolation of his own country : but he has such clear and bright views of God's counsels and plans from the beginning, and of the wonderful way in which he works them out in faithful conformity to his original design, that they present themselves to his illumined eye as already accomplished : and while he sees Jehovah reigning gloriously in Jerusalem on the one hand, on the other he contemplates the defenced cities of the terrible nations—Babylon or Nineveh, and the whole polity of arbitrary godless power, which they represent—reduced to a heap of ruins ; and the furious rage of those nations which was now breaking upon Judea like a hurricane, he sees brought down as quietly and as completely as the burning heat of an Eastern sun is subdued by the shadow of a cloud. And thus passing from images of violence to those of gentleness, he contemplates the day when all the nations and peoples over whom the dark covering of that heathen tyranny is now spread, shall come up to keep the feast at Jerusalem, in fellowship with Israel, and shall there rejoice with them in worshipping Jehovah and receiving his laws. The Assyrians themselves do not seem to be included here, or in any part of these chapters, among the nations to be thus blessed ; unless it be in verse 22 of chapter xxiv., and there it is doubtful if such be the meaning. The faith that even Assyria was eventually to become a part with Israel of the inheritance of Jehovah, is unequivocally expressed in chapter xix. : but we cannot wonder that Isaiah should have ordinarily spoken of this cruel tyranny as merely evil and obnoxious to entire destruction : nay, we may say, that—considering the unavoidable limitations which control human thought and language—less extreme denunciations would not have declared, in the way which the

circumstances of Isaiah and his countrymen needed, that Jehovah was the righteous and unsparing judge of all selfish, godless, tyranny and rapacity.

I have already noticed the idiom by which, in all probability, Moab is here (xxv. 10) put for Assyria, as Babylon in the Book of Revelation means Rome. Isaiah's exuberance of imagination, and love of concreteness—elsewhere exhibited by such names as 'The desert of the sea,' 'The valley of vision,' 'Ariel the city where David dwelt,'—may sufficiently account for the usage: but it is worth while to consider that in times of strong and deep religious enthusiasm, such as our Civil War, or the days of Wesley and Whitfield, when men would be more than usually apt to choose the most expressive, instead of merely traditional phrases, these concrete symbols become especial favourites. The 'fortress' in verse 12, and the 'lofty city' of verse 5 in the next chapter, are plainly the same as the 'palace of strangers,' and 'city of the terrible nations,' above. With these, and their fall, Isaiah now contrasts the strong city in the land of Judah, which has the salvation of Jehovah for its walls and bulwarks. And he puts into the mouth of the people of Judah, a song, such as they were accustomed to sing, as they went up from their houses to the temple, in festive procession, to worship. It was not very long since Hezekiah had opened the gates of the temple, shut by the profane Ahaz, and had renewed the public worship of Jehovah with burnt offerings accompanied by 'the song of Jehovah, and with trumpets and the instruments of David: '* but on less grave occasions than their return from national apostasy, the opening of the gates of the temple, to receive the procession of worshippers seems to have been a solemn ceremonial; † and here Isaiah represents the temple receiving the redeemed and righteous nation which by keeping to its faith and trust in Jehovah, has obtained peace of heart instead of the miserable state of anxiety, and national deliverance instead of the foreign oppression described in chapter xxiv. The Temple and Jerusalem itself stand on a rock; but their true foundation is the Rock of Ages,

* Chron. xxix. 3, 27—30. † Psalm xxiv. 6, 7, 9; cxviii. 19.

Jehovah himself. The image of the tyrant city brought to the dust, and trodden by the feet of the poor, suggests the thought of the path in which those feet had previously been walking. It led though the midst of God's judgments, through a land 'devoured by the curse;' but they waited patiently, and found that God was leading them all the way, and making the path level and straight before them as they went. The 'waiting' suggests a new image: during the long night of Assyrian oppression, their soul had longed for rest, or for the morning to close a night in which no rest was possible; and with the first dawn of deliverance their spirit would spring forth to new activity, desirous to practise the righteousness it had learnt through affliction. But there are some so reprobate that neither correction nor mercy will teach them righteousness: even in the restored and holy nation they will continue their evil doings, their selfishness and their oppression of the poor, and will refuse to recognize the invisible King and his laws: and therefore the zeal of Jehovah in the restoration of his true people shall prove a consuming fire to destroy these his enemies. Verse 12 corresponds with our prayer, 'Give peace in our time, O Lord, for there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God:' other lords have had dominion over the nation, because it has chosen other gods; but henceforth Judah will worship no God but Jehovah, and he will again be both God and King to her, while those other kings and gods are become dead men and spectres, never to rise to life and power again. The word translated 'shades' in verse 14, and 'dead' at the end of verse 19,* is 'rephaim' and means both 'giants' and 'silent ones;' so that it expresses a notion something like that of our word 'spectres:' this word, and other parts of the imagery, indicate a connection between these verses, and the 21st; and there will not be much difficulty in following this connection if we remember that it is an under-current of poetical imagination, and not a series of dry syllogisms; and that, as is usual with Isaiah, there is a certain alternation of ideas, which makes the light and dark, the present and the

* As in chap. xiv. 9.

future, of the vision, rise and fall like the waves of the sea. Thus, no sooner has the thought of the destroyed heathens suggested that of the increased numbers and prosperity of Israel, than the prophet is reminded that, instead of their being able to rejoice in any such increase, they are like women who have *not* brought forth children, and whose prayers* and pains are without result: but immediately his confidence revives:—Judah's dead, and shades of the dead, the dwellers in the grave and the unseen world, are not like Assyria's dead; for a dew, such as makes the grass grow, is fallen upon them, and they shall 'awake and sing,'—Judah shall not merely bring forth more children in the place of those she has lost, but the very earth shall give birth to those already dead. Some commentators prefer to read 'Might thy dead live! might my dead bodies arise!' in the optative: and the question is discussed—not without reference to the disputed date of the prophecy—how far these words, with either rendering, imply a belief in the resurrection of individuals from the dead. I should say that they declare that the now depopulated land shall again be full of inhabitants, and that the image of a resurrection under which this declaration is made implies some belief, though it cannot be said how definite or indefinite, in the possibility if not the certainty of such a resurrection. The present is a time of affliction:—Yes, but only for 'a little moment;' and Jehovah's people have only to wait patiently, and they will see him come to deliver them, and to punish all evil-doers; and then the earth will disclose and give up her slain for another purpose—that they may rise in the judgment against the tyrants of whose guilt there seemed no evidence. The 'song' which began in verse 1 is considered to end with verse 19, while verse 20 declares, in Jehovah's name, that it is only necessary to wait a short time for 'that day' in which the song may be fitly sung: but I have some doubt

* A whispered prayer: 'beautifully expressive,' says Alexander, 'of submissive, humble prayer, like that of Hannah when "she spake in her heart and only her lips moved but her voice was not heard," although, as she said herself, "she poured out her soul before God," which is the exact sense of יִקְרָא in this place. A like expression is applied to prayer in the title of Psalm cii.' The whole description of Hannah, 1 Samuel i., is apposite.

whether these precise, classic-like demarcations, are not as foreign to the Hebrew and prophetic genius as they are difficult to determine without arbitrary changes of the literal sense of the text. The 'entering into the chambers' may, not improbably, allude to the command that the children of Israel should not go out during the night of the destruction of the first-born of Egypt: and if we do not, with Grotius, suppose another allusion to Hezekiah's shutting himself within the walls of Jerusalem till Sennacherib's army was cut off, the correspondence of the two may perhaps be attributed to the influence which a poet's imagination must always feel from the important events about him at the time. The idea of Jehovah, the king, leaving his royal residence, visiting the places where crime has been committed, and judging and executing sentence on the criminal, we have had before.

'Leviathan' (which in Job means the crocodile), and 'the dragon' or sea-serpent, may either be all names for the Assyrian oppressor, or they may represent both Assyria and Egypt, and so correspond with the reference to those two nations in verses 12 and 13. As regards the various endeavours to settle the rhythmical construction of verses 3—5 of this (27th) chapter, it is enough for me to refer to what I have said above and elsewhere, as to the attempts at classical demarcations; and to observe that the briars and thorns seem to be the evil part of the Jewish nation, which needed to be cleared out of the vineyard, rather than the foreign power which was made the instrument of that clearance. The 'taking hold of my strength' is best explained by the double image of taking refuge in a fortress, and at the horns of the altar. The exact meaning of the words in verse 8 is obscure; but it possibly involves the image of Jehovah inflicting on his faithless bride the moderate punishment of a divorce, for which 'contending' and 'sending away' are the legal phrases; while the temporariness of the punishment is indicated by 'the day of the east wind,' as though the duration was limited by the time of the storm. The result of this punishment shall be that the images, or the groves, of Baal and Astarte shall be thrown down, and their altars

broken up, and the fragments scattered about like the chalkstones which (as Strabo mentions) were familiar objects on the ground near Jerusalem. But the heathen enemies of Israel are incapable of reformation, because they are 'a people of no understanding;' and therefore the prophet foretells their utter destruction: he transfers to them the image of the vineyard, and pictures it as the prey of the weakest destroyers (compare 'feet of the needy' above):—the calf shall browse on the green vines, and when they are withered, the women shall gather them for firewood. In that day Jehovah will gather (literally 'beat,' or 'thresh,' as the manner was) the fruit of his oliveyards, and gather the remnant of his own people from the north to the south, from the Euphrates to the torrent now called El-Arish,* collecting them with such care—literally 'one to one,'—that not one shall be lost. The great silver trumpet, the blast of which, from the days of Moses in the wilderness, had gathered the princes to council, mustered the hosts in the camp, or called Jehovah and his people to remember the national covenant 'in the day of their gladness, in their solemn days, and over the sacrifices of their burnt offerings and their peace offerings,'† shall be heard in that day of Jehovah:—'And they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem.'

It would be no less silly than dishonest to pretend that these chapters are by Isaiah, if there were evidence to the contrary: and if their genuineness were merely doubtful, we must abstain from drawing from them any of those historical or biographical conclusions which authentic documents might supply as to the times and character of the writer. But in as far as I may venture to form an opinion, I must say that the sceptical criticism has not, as to these chapters, even an appearance of more than ingenious trifling; the arguments founded on asserted peculiarities of style and diction in the original, are, as usual, met by counter-arguments, or positive denials of the

* Genesis xv. 18; 1 Kings viii. 65.

† Numbers x. 1—10; Jeremiah iv. 5; Joel ii. 1, 15.

facts,* on the part of the orthodox scholars, as well as of the non-orthodox Rosenmüller: my own views on the possibility of proving anything by such arguments I have already stated. And therefore, since Isaiah's name is on the old, genuine title-page, and only omitted in the modern, hypothetically-constructed one, let the reader keep, like me, within the limits of ordinary, matter-of-fact, common-sense, English criticism, and then he will see something better worth his notice than whole continents of cloud-land. This is the fact that while we recognize, throughout these chapters, the old familiar features—the accustomed political faith and poetic genius—of Isaiah, we see how 'the years that bring the philosophic mind,' and still more the sufferings, personal and national, which are God's opportunity for developing the spiritual life, were now telling upon the prophet. The tone is more subdued, and gentler; the evangelical temper shows itself increasingly through the patriotic; political events are more subordinate to the universal life of things; and the national faith in the LORD of Judah and of the Jew, is brought into more intimate dependence on the deeper trust in him as the LORD of the Church and of the spirit of man.

That a like religious temper of mind might be properly attributed to an imaginary prophet, living in Babylon during the exile, or in Jerusalem in the time of Cambyses, I allow: but historical fact, and coherent romance, are not the same thing.

* Delitzsch says 'It is just as certain that the cycle of prophecy in chapters xxiv.—xxvii. belongs to Isaiah, and not to any other prophet, as it is that there are not two men to be found in the world with faces exactly alike.' And he supports this conclusion by a detailed criticism of the style and diction of these chapters.

CHAPTER XIX.

ISAIAH xxviii.—xxxv.—POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PROSPECTS OF JUDAH.—
ARIEL, THE LION OF GOD.—WORLDLY STATE-CRAFT.—TRUE INSIGHT.—THE
EMBASSY TO EGYPT.—PERSECUTION OF THE PROPHETS.—DUMB IDOLS AND
THE UNSEEN TEACHER.—THE HOLY SOLEMNITIES.—TALMUDICAL ACCOUNT
OF FESTIVE PROCESSIONS.—THE STROKE OF DOOM ON SENNACHERIB.—
THE REAL DELIVERER.—SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF WOMEN.—THE SIEGE
RAISED.—EDOM PUT FOR ASSYRIA.—RETURN OF THE RANSOMED CAPTIVES.

ISAIAH xxviii. to xxxv.—The correspondence of thoughts and images, and the unity of subject and sentiment, seem to mark these eight chapters as successive paragraphs or sections of one prophecy, representing an original series of discourses which may have been spread over several months at least, from the embassy to Egypt to the arrival of Rabshakeh before Jerusalem, or even till after the disaster which compelled Sennacherib's retreat: and with this qualification the whole contents accord with the date indicated by their place in the book. The only difficulty is that involved in the reference to Ephraim at the beginning of the first of these chapters. For if we take this to imply that Samaria had not yet fallen we must give the first four verses a date several years antecedent to that which is most suitable to the rest of this chapter as well as to those which follow. The descriptions by modern travellers of the beauty and richness of the hill of Samaria with terraced heights rising out of a fertile valley, certainly tempt us to adhere to the literal explanation of the phrase 'drunkards of Ephraim;' and the difficulty is then best met in the way I have pointed out as to chapter xvii.; but the phrase is exactly analogous to 'men of Sodom,' in chapter i., as well as to the ordinary language of all the Hebrew writers, and may be taken without any violence to mean the leading men of Jerusalem, to whom all the rest of the chapter

relates. Isaiah fuses into one image, the heads of the nation, crowned with flowers at their habitual debauches, and the capital cities—Samaria and Jerusalem—each reposing in its fertile valley, and crowned with a chaplet of towers intertwined with vines and olives: the flowers are of themselves fading, and Jehovah will follow up on Judah the punishment he has already inflicted upon Ephraim, by casting their revellers' crowns to the ground with a strong hand, and trampling them under foot:—employing as his instrument the overwhelming flood of Assyrian invasion. Yet this wrath is but the means of love: its purpose is that Jehovah himself may become the crown of glory and the diadem of beauty to all those who—not being utterly corrupt—shall remain from this purification of the land. In that day he will be wisdom to the judge, and in his strength the soldier shall turn back the tide of battle to the enemy's gate.*

But at present not only are these—the hereditary nobles and heads of tribes, and the elected or appointed judges—wanting alike in military ability, and in judicial uprightness, but the priests (including the Levites) and the prophets—the ministers of national worship, and the teachers and controllers of education of the whole people—are equally 'gone out of the way through strong drink.' Drunkenness was no doubt literally the habitual vice of the higher orders in Isaiah's time; and then, as in all times, it was the symbol of every kind of debased subjection of the human, to the animal, nature. Such nobles could not govern; such judges could not administer, nor such priests expound, the law; nor was any 'vision' possible to prophets in whom the eye of reason and of faith was thus obscured. Lowth's explanation, that verses 9 and 10 are a scoffing speech of the drunken prophets, is usually preferred,† and I have printed the English text in that form. Yet I have some doubt, as I have before said, whether these dramatic speeches may not be inventions of the commenta-

* 2 Sam. xi. 23; 2 Kings xviii. 8.

† Mr. Cheyne translates—'Correct, correct, correct, correct; direct, direct, direct, direct'—and in a note says—'Heb. *sav lāsav kav lākav*, words evidently chosen for the sake of their assonance, to represent the stammer of a drunkard.'

tors ; and the sense is as clear, if we understand Isaiah to ask how it is possible in this general debasement to find any one capable of learning true wisdom, and then to add (in the tone of remonstrance adopted in the epistle to the Hebrews), that though the nation was no longer in its infancy, and ought to be capable of manly knowledge, yet it did in fact require to be instructed again in the very rudiments, and to have these impressed on it by perpetual repetition. And then—whether the thought is suggested by that of drunken and scoffing stutterers, or of children unapt to learn—he tells them that Jehovah will send them a teacher who shall speak to them with the barbarous Assyrian tongue : they will then hear words very different from those which they now despise because they proclaim, ‘This is the rest ; cause the weary to rest ;’ and they will then find these repeated warnings become their condemnation, because they will have deprived them of all excuse.

He anticipates the answer of ‘the scornful men that rule this people in Jerusalem ;’ for has he not heard it often enough, year after year ? It was their policy which in the time of Ahaz had delivered Judah from her imminent danger by bringing Tiglath-Pileser upon Syria and Ephraim : and if it was at the sacrifice of Judah’s independence, and at the price of much tribute, to say nothing of the destruction of the sister-people of their own race, yet these evils were nothing in comparison of the advantages ; for they touched them—the rich nobles in Jerusalem—but little, seeing they had the land and the remaining wealth of the country accumulated in their hands, and could by suitable perversion of the law wring out from the poor enough means of luxury to last their time, whatever might happen afterwards. Besides, they had not only secured themselves by a treaty with that personification of death and hell, the Assyrian, but they had outwitted him,—for what chance could a mere barbarian soldier have against the deep-laid policy of an old, long-civilized state ? they were in communication with Egypt and Ethiopia, and at the proper time they would bring the armies of Tirhakeh to free them from the power of Sennacherib. And to this the prophet replies, that when the storm does sweep over

the land, as it assuredly will, these 'refuges of lies' will prove no shelter to their builders; they have been tried by the plummet of honesty and righteousness, and found to be so out of line that they must come down: but meanwhile, nay from of old, Jehovah has himself founded a really serviceable house for his people—namely, the ancient constitution and polity of which he himself is the chief corner-stone; and the man who trusts in that foundation, believing that it really is there, will not be urged to any impatient acts of panic, whatever may be the apparent danger. The reader will remember the descriptions of the enormous corner-stones in ancient Jewish buildings: and will compare our LORD's parable of the house founded on the rock. There is a doubt whether the last clause in verse 19 can be fairly translated 'Only to hear the report shall be a distress;' and whether it is not better to read, 'And affliction alone will make you understand doctrine,' alluding to verse 9, where the last two words of the original are the same.

Jehovah will break forth upon his own people, as he did in old times upon the heathen Philistines;* it is a 'strange work' thus to afflict and destroy the people of his love, as though they were heathens: but he has determined to do it,—to execute justice to the uttermost; therefore let the mockers take heed that they do not make this determination more stringent upon themselves, by persevering in their evil way. Then the prophet propounds a parable: the husbandman has a place, and a time, for each successive operation of his husbandry; he now ploughs, now harrows, sowing one seed broad-cast, and another in rows; beats out the light aniseed (perhaps used then, as now in Italy, to flavour the bread as well as to make spirit) with a rod, and the corn with the heavy threshing-wain; while both the heavier and the lighter of these operations are carefully regulated so as to do no damage. All these processes—in which we notice that the harsh ones of breaking up the land and threshing out the grain predominate—are taught the husbandman by God; and their order and skilful arrangement are the reflection of his wisdom and

* 2 Sam. v. 18—25; 1 Chron. xiv. 9—16.

plans. Isaiah leaves it to his hearers to apply the parable to their own case, and so to understand how Jehovah is regulating all his dealings with the nation, to the end that he too may gather the wheat into his garner at last.

Chapter xxix. The simplest meaning of 'Ariel' is 'lion of God;' but it also signifies 'hearth of God' when derived from another root. In the former sense it comes to mean 'a hero,' as in 2 Sam. xxiii. 20; Isaiah xxxiii. 7; and in the latter it occurs in Ezekiel xliii. 15, 16, for the brazen hearth of the great altar of burnt offerings, thence commonly called 'the brazen,' though the rest of it was of stone. There is no doubt that Jerusalem is pointed out by this enigmatical name; and the immediate context, as well as the expression in chapter xxxi. 9—'Jehovah whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem,'—make it probable that Isaiah intended to involve both meanings in the word, as though he had said, 'Woe to the city of heroes, woe to the city of sacrifices: it shall now be put to the test what God and what man think as to both.'

David, that lion of God, had first encamped against Jerusalem, and then made it the abode of his royal house, and the capital of his kingdom; so that it became itself an Ariel, a lion of God, in the land:—

'Judah is a lion's whelp:
From the prey, my son, thou art gone up:
'He stooped down, he couched as a lion,
And as an old lion: who shall rouse him up?
'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come;
And unto him shall the gathering of the people be.'

And after the vicissitudes of 300 years, and in the midst of present dangers, the people of Jerusalem were still confident in the strength of their 'lion of God,' and year by year came up to the public festivals to lay their accustomed offerings on the 'altar of God;' though with little remembrance that it was not in the altar and the city, but in Jehovah himself, that David put trust, and found his strength. Therefore Jehovah will bring Ariel low; the proud roar of the lion shall be changed for the weak,

stridulous voice, which the art of the ventriloquizing necromancer brings out of the ground ; and the enemies of Jehovah shall be sacrificed and consumed on the hearth of his altar. First, his spiritual enemies among the Jews themselves, but afterwards the heathen oppressors of his people ; and the lion shall recover his God-derived strength ; and thus both in adversity and in success, 'it shall be unto me as Ariel.'—'He who threatens your destruction shall vanish like a dream, "*par levibus ventis volucrique simillima somno*:" he who threatens your destruction shall awake as from a dream, and find himself cheated of his expectations ; for—as Grotius beautifully says—"spes sunt vigilantium somnia." '*

Some commentators understand the words 'Add ye year to year' to mean that at the end of one or two years from that time Jerusalem should be besieged : but the other way of understanding it is at least as simple and as forcible.

The inhabitants of the now self-satisfied city draw themselves back in incredulous and contemptuous wonder on hearing Isaiah's warnings : and therefore he tells them, that they, their rulers, and their teachers, are so besotted—not with the transient effects of wine, but with the abiding pressure of sin,—that they can comprehend nothing of God's methods and purposes. Where no vision—no insight into the divine government of the world—is, the people perisheth ; and such is the present condition of Jerusalem and Judah, of the learned and the unlearned alike. And the reason is, that though they continue in the routine observance of all such maxims and rules of morality and religion as the existing standards of social respectability demand ; yet they have no inward

* Alexander on the verse : he also quotes from Barnes a passage in one of Mungo Park's Journals :—'No sooner had I shut my eyes than fancy would convey me to the streams and rivers of my native land. There as I wandered along the verdant bank, I surveyed the clear stream with transport, and hastened to swallow the delightful draught ; but, alas ! disappointment awaked me, and I found myself a lonely captive, perishing of thirst, amid the wilds of Africa.' Lowth quotes from Lucretius—

'Ac veluti in somnis sitiens quum quærit, et humor
Non datur, ardorem in membris qui stinguere possit,
Sed laticum simulacra petit, frustra que laborat,
In medioque sitit torrenti flumine potans.'

love and fear of God in their hearts. They wonder how Isaiah can pretend to teach them, the wise and prudent ; but they will wonder in another fashion when they see what Jehovah actually does : they are satisfied that their astute counsels, though hidden as it seems from Jehovah, are quite competent to meet the dangers with which his prophet threatens them ; but they will find that it is not from Jehovah, but from its own confusion and disgrace, that this policy will have to hide itself. They have been turning things upside down at their own will : they put bitter for sweet, and call good, evil : they rest the home government, and the social prosperity of the country, upon a basis of oppression of the poor and aggrandizement of the rich by abuse of the powers of law and order ; and the foreign relations of the state, on treaties degrading in themselves, and never intended to be kept faithfully, with Assyria and Egypt : and with all these schemes and practices they mean to restore, or prop up, the falling condition of a nation which has never yet prospered, except by adherence to the old fundamental principle of its constitution,—faith in Jehovah, and in the covenant by which he became their King, and they his people, with mutual rights and duties. Isaiah can be as contemptuous as these ‘ scornful men ’ themselves ; and he tells them that all this scheming, all this turning of things upside down, is but so much clay in the hands of the Potter, who will do just what he originally intended, carrying out exactly the designs laid down by him from the first :—all the turning upside down in the world will not alter the relation between the thing made and its maker. In a very little while there shall, indeed, be a complete reversion of the present state of things. The land was now ruled by men who were always on the watch for iniquity ; who made a man obnoxious to the forms of law for trifles which had no criminal intent, in order to bring him under their extortions if they wanted his property, or under their crushing power if they wished to silence him because he dared to plead for justice, or rebuke the unjust ruler as he sat in the gate ; and this force was constantly used in the one case and the other (as the whole history of the Jews shows

us), with no check but the victim's death. But these men shall be cut off, and cease; the Holy One of Israel will re-establish his authority; his word and his works shall be heard and seen of all men; and the poor and the meek will rejoice in his protection and strength. The house of Jacob might, and must, be brought low for a time, for its sins; he might be ashamed at his humiliation, and his face might wax pale at the prospect of his name being put out from among the nations, through the slaughter and captivity of his children: but Jehovah who redeemed Abraham out of the naturalism in which he was living with the rest of his race, who gave him a spiritual position, and a promise to him and to his children, founded on that spiritual position,—He will remember his promise, and bring back to Jacob his children; and they too, like their first fathers, shall be seen to be not a race of merely natural, earthly creatures, but 'the work of Jehovah's hands,' a chosen, spiritually organized people, capable of true wisdom and true obedience, and of actual fellowship and communion with the Holy God.

Chapter xxx. begins with a new and more direct denunciation of the Egyptian alliance, devised by the men who 'wove a web' of plots, or sought to 'cover themselves with a covering,' which Isaiah called 'a refuge of lies,' in chap. xxviii. Zoan, the Tanis of the Greeks, was a royal city, and one of the most ancient of Lower Egypt. Hanes is probably Hnès or Ehnès, the Anysis of Herodotus, and the Heracleopolis which was the capital of a nome of Middle Egypt, and a royal city, as may be inferred from Manetho's mention of two Heracleote dynasties. And if there were two or more contemporary kings in Egypt at this period (on which point the opposing facts have been already stated), it would seem not unlikely that the Jewish ambassadors may have sought Tirhakeh at the latter city; and, at the former, Sethos, the Tanitic king of whose invasion by Sennacherib Herodotus relates the well-known story.

The first words of verse 6—'The burden of the beasts of the south'—have been much discussed. Some commentators take 'burden' in the sense of 'prophecy' or

'vision,' as in chapter xxi. and elsewhere; but are then again divided in opinion as to whether the words are a marginal gloss which has been erroneously brought into the text, or an episodical title introduced by Isaiah himself, as though he paused somewhat abruptly and said—'That caravan of asses and camels struggling through the sandy desert among the lions and serpents, rises before me as a distinct vision, and deserves a paragraph of its own.' Others understand 'burden' in its literal meaning, and explain it as referring to the heavy load of presents with which the asses and camels travelling southward are laden; and then the sentence will be translated—'Oh, the burden of the beasts;' 'what a burden to the beasts;' or 'as to the beasts.'

'Rahab' is used here, as elsewhere, to signify Egypt; but it is uncertain whether it is an Egyptian word and name of the country, or only an enigmatical Hebrew name, like 'Ariel.' The Hebrew means 'rage,' or 'insolence,' and thence, in the opinion of some authorities, a 'sea monster.' We may therefore either read, 'Therefore I call her Rahab the inactive,' or 'The blusterer that sitteth still.' The Authorized Version seems to understand the passage to mean, 'Therefore I have constantly warned the Jews that their true Egypt, their true security, is quiet faith in Jehovah.'

Isaiah then goes on to show that he does not consider this alliance with Egypt as a matter of mere temporal and temporary interest; great principles, laws of universal application, are at stake, and their enunciation is worthy to be recorded in the most public and the most permanent ways;—on the wooden or brass table, where he that runs may read, and in the parchment-roll for future and quiet study, 'that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.' He remarks the state of heart which was dictating their whole policy; their trust in Egypt abroad, and in 'oppression and perverseness' at home: he tells them their whole life is a rebellion and a lie; and that they are carrying this lie to its height, when they call on their seers and prophets, the national teachers and preachers, to help them in their work,—to tell them no

more of the right, but only of the smooth, path : nay, call on them to leave the narrow, irksome way themselves, and to employ their office and powers in guiding them in that pleasant road by which they will escape from the Holy One of Israel, and his wearisome claims upon their consciences. To themselves their condition seems that of a strong and high wall, which can resist any violence from without ; but the prophet discerns, what they in their blindness cannot, that there is a crack beginning within, and that this internal pressure of their moral and social iniquity will ere long make their wall bulge out and come down in overwhelming ruin, in an instant, and when least expected.

The expressions in verses 20 and 21 are among the indications I have already noticed, that, in the time at which Isaiah spoke, such prophets as remained faithful in the general corruption were repressed and silenced by persecution. These allusions might at first sight appear a reason for referring this prophecy to the reign of Ahaz, when the temple was shut up, and the high priest himself assisted in new and unlawful rites ; but if we remember that the power of the worldly irreligious nobles of that period was still unbroken, we shall (as I have also noticed) find no difficulty in understanding how much persecution of the spiritual teachers would be still carried on in spite of Hezekiah ; and Isaiah's encouraging tone as to the spiritual aspect of things, in contrast with the temporal afflictions he foretells, shows that he saw signs (and if he saw them, they were there) that the tide was about to turn, just as he must have done when he denounced Shebna. For we shall have a very unreal notion of the Jewish kings and people if we suppose that their national character, even in its most spiritual features, changed about instantly with a change of the occupant of the throne. It takes a generation at least to make any such important change, and especially in so tough and independent a race as the Jews always were. And, lastly, it must be noticed that the teachers were as much 'removed into a corner' by their own corruptness as by persecution.

Jeremiah describes the idols as plated, or ornamented,

with plates of gold and silver, and dressed in garments of blue and purple. When Josiah was purging the land from idolatry he is said to have 'defiled' the altars and high places by burning men's bones on them, by which act he at once expressed contempt, and prevented their being again employed for the same purpose. But these idols of which Isaiah now speaks are the private household gods, which a merely national and public reform, like that of Hezekiah or Josiah, could never touch.

Contrasted with these dumb idols on the one hand, and on the other with the faithful teachers of the restored and converted people, is the still small voice of God himself: the word which each man shall hear for himself in the inmost recesses of his heart, as of an invisible guide continually directing him at every step, that he diverge not the least from the straight path.

The promise in verse 23 probably alludes, as so many other passages do, to the way in which the land actually lay waste in those days, whether ravaged by the enemy, or not cultivated because men had no heart to sow where they could not hope to reap: and this picture of peaceful husbandry becomes a symbol of the political prosperity which should follow the overthrow of the Assyrians; while both—as the connection with verses 20 and 21 shows—are types of the spiritual blessings which the prophet knew to be more worthy than either. As the prison-fare, the 'bread of adversity and the water of affliction,' were the tokens of God's wrath, so this succeeding plenty is of his favour, and of his actually feeding their souls with the bread of life. Then shall the Spirit, the divine life of which the Indwelling Word is the source, be poured out like rivers and streams of water, and fertilize the soul as they do the hills. To realize the full force of this favourite image of the sudden pouring out of rivers, we must remember that in southern countries, ravines which have been dry for the whole summer are suddenly turned into deep rivers. The flood comes down all at once.

It is the Name, the power, and presence, of Jehovah, coming from far, because there was no man at hand to help, which shall work the hoped for, and promised,

deliverance. By a fusion of one image with another, the judgments of Jehovah upon the devastators of Israel are described as a fierce fire, with its mingled flame and smoke heavily ascending ; as the sentence of a king whose word is death to the criminal ; as an overwhelming torrent, like that to which the Assyrian himself was formerly compared ;* as a sieve in which the corn shall not be sifted from the chaff, but a sheer riddance made of both, while both (as the ancient manner was) are exposed to the wind—the blast of ‘his breath ;’ and as a bridle, not to guide them aright, but to lead them to their own destruction.

In contrast with this punishment of the great oppressor, stands the joy of the delivered nation :—‘Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept ; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe, to come into the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel.’

All the festivals were kept ‘from even to even,’ this being the Jewish method of reckoning the day, as we see in the first chapter of Genesis, where the day is always said to begin with the evening. Thus the Sabbath began on Friday evening, and lasted till Saturday evening. But the passover was in a special manner the ‘holy solemnity kept in the night,’ and from Matthew xxvi. 30, as well as from the still existing practice of the Jews, we know that a hymn was sung at the end of the supper. These are but the more literal signs that Isaiah throughout this passage (verses 27—33) is connecting the now near prospect of their deliverance from the Assyrian, with the old deliverance which Jehovah wrought for them in the days of Moses and Pharaoh. This connection was subsequently recognized in the preservation (or it may be origination) of the tradition that Sennacherib’s army was destroyed on the night of the passover : and if we enter into the spirit of those magnificent 11th and 12th chapters of Exodus, and into the thoughts and hopes which were kept alive in the soul of every earnest Hebrew by the sacramental institution in which that national deliverance was perennially recorded, we shall be able to realize something of the depth of meaning conveyed by Isaiah to those who heard

* Chap. viii. 8.

him, in the words, 'Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept.' But there were other festivals which, though not less religious, called for more 'lightness of heart' than the passover. A tradition,* which is so exact a counterpart of the various passages in the Old Testament referring to the same and like subjects, that its accuracy can hardly be questioned, enables us to picture to the life the scene which, in Isaiah's times, might have been witnessed all over the country, on the eve of the yearly feasts. When the season for presenting the first-fruits to Jehovah the King of the nation arrived, the country-people assembled themselves in some chief village or town of their tribe. The men were required by the strict law of Moses to appear three times yearly before Jehovah, and they would be accompanied by many of their wives and daughters, whether actuated, like Hannah, by the desire to offer some vow, or dedicate a first-born son in person, or only by the wish to see the great City on an occasion when the traders thronged its fairs, and the holiday-makers its feasts, as well as the worshippers its Temple. The party thus assembled passed the night before they went up to Jerusalem, in the streets, not to contract any ceremonial defilement: at daybreak the head man of the company,—perhaps the village Levite—awakened them with the words, 'Rise, let us go up to Zion, to Jehovah our God;' and they set forward in a choral procession. A bull with gilded horns, crowned with olive-leaves, went first; a piper playing on the pipe, the damsels with their timbrels, and the bearers of the baskets of wheat and grapes and the jars of honey or oil, followed after; and the sacred dance kept time with the voices of the alternate choirs as they sang, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go up into the house of Jehovah.' The simultaneous and silent halt, the prostration in prayer, the burst of weeping, which in the present day mark the arrival of a party of Jewish pilgrims on the first rising ground which commands a view of Jerusalem, is the melancholy shadow of the exultation with which their forefathers lifted up their eyes to the hills of Zion from the same spots, and

* Quoted by Vitringa, from the Talmudical Tract *Biccurim*.

saw the ‘city compact together,’ with ‘peace within her walls and prosperity in her palaces.’ The song was frequently repeated as they drew near the city ; and as their ‘feet stood within its gates’ the people of Jerusalem welcomed them with shouts, and the priests with honour, and they proceeded to present their offerings before Jehovah, ‘at the same time reciting the confession in the form prescribed by Moses.’ The Psalms called in our version ‘Songs of Degrees,” that is, ‘of steps,’ or ‘marches,’ are all illustrated by this traditional account of the use of the one* here quoted ; for all are suitable for various occasions of solemn processions to the temple : and other Psalms such as lxviii. are easiest understood in like manner ; while the subject has farther light thrown on it by the historical description of the processions composed, not of a few villagers, but of the army or of the nation, under its nobles, and headed by a David, a Solomon, or a Jehoshaphat.†

And then Isaiah unites these images with those of the destruction of the Assyrian by the glorious might of Jehovah ; each stroke of the ‘rod of doom’ which now falls on him who ‘smote the nations with a perpetual stroke,’ is accompanied by a burst of triumphal music ; ‡ and he sees the chariots and armies, and the bodies of their owners, consumed in a fire kindled by the wrath of Jehovah. Tophet was a place in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, on the south-east of Jerusalem, where was the altar of Moloch, on which children were burnt. There seems an ironical allusion to Moloch—the king—in the words of Isaiah, ‘for the king it is prepared,’ and to the human sacrifices which should now be represented by a slaughter of the Assyrian army ; and also an anticipation that the king of Assyria and his army would be actually defeated and their bodies burned in these very valleys.§

Chapter xxxi. If the whole land between Memphis and

* Psalm cxxii. I do not mean to pronounce peremptorily on the questions as to the meaning of this title.

† 1 Chron. xv. xvi ; 2 Chron. v. vi. vii. ; xx. 27, 28.

‡ ‘The Boeotians and other neighbours . . . danced to the sound of joyful music when the walls [of Peiræus] were demolished.’—Grote’s *Hist. of Greece*, ix. 449.

§ See 2 Kings xxiii. 10 ; Jeremiah vii. 31, 32 ; xix. 1 ff.

Thebes was filled with the king's stables, and if Thebes itself could (as Homer says) send two hundred warriors with chariots and horses, out of each of its hundred gates, and if the astute politicians at Jerusalem were combining with the wise councillors of Egypt to make these forces available against the common enemy, yet all this would be of no use. Jehovah, too, has his policy and plans from which he swerves not, and which he does not carry out under the direction of worldly men, nor by their help. He will first let the nation learn the vanity of trusting in an arm of flesh, and then, when they begin to turn to him from whom they have so deeply revolted, he will come to save them, as of old. I may notice, with other commentators, the resemblance of Isaiah's simile of the lion in verse 4 to that of Homer,—

‘Ὡς δ’ ἀπὸ σώματος οὔτι λέοντ’ αἰθωνα δύνανται
Ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι μέγα πεινάοντα διέσθαι—

and the allusion in verse 5 to the passover, when the prophet, in describing the action of the mother-bird which hovers over her nest, uses the word which gave the name to that institution. There is a difference of opinion as to the proper rendering of the first words of verse 9. Some translate ‘and his rock shall pass away for terror,’ taking ‘rock’ to mean the king, in parallelism to ‘princes;’ while others, quoting the Latin proverb, ‘fugit ultra casam,’ explain it to mean that he shall in his panic overpass his frontier, or even other, fortresses, to escape as far as possible from pursuit. I have retained our Authorized Version, which has good authority, and gives as good a meaning as any other.

Chapter xxxii. The deliverance of Judah is to be effected, not by Shebna and his supporters at home and abroad, but by the right hand of the LORD of the nation: its condition, on the side of the nation, is not the diplomacy of those rulers and councillors, but a national and personal turning from idols to the true God; and its result will be, not the confirmation of the wealth and power of the selfish worldly men as they hoped, nor the removal of the still existing restraints on their habits of aggrandizing and enjoying themselves without regard to God or man, while

they defied the one and oppressed the other;—but the establishment of righteousness throughout the land, the king and his princes ruling in justice and humanity, the priests and prophets teaching even the most ignorant to ‘understand knowledge;’ and the whole of society showing that moral reformation which is never more certainly indicated than by the right use of those words which denote men’s moral qualities. We have seen what Thucydides says on this point; but we have only to look at home to see how we ourselves give all such words as conscience, morality, honour, virtue, charity, justice, religion, a meaning, base or noble, in exact correspondence with each speaker’s own moral state. Isaiah’s contrast between the nobility of birth or rank and that of character has been followed, consciously or unconsciously, by Chaucer:—

‘For villainy maketh villain,
And by his deeds a churl is seen.
* * * * *
But understand in thine intent
That this is not mine intendment,
To clepen no wight in no age
Only gentle for his lineage;
But whoso that is virtuous,
And in his port not outrageous;
When such one thou see’st thee beforne,
Though he be not gentle born,
Thou mayest well see this in soth
That he is gentle, because he doth
As ’longeth to a gentleman;
Of them none other deem I can;
For certainly withouten drede
A churl is deemed by his deed,
Of high or low as you may see,
Or of what kindred that he be.’*

Men have, more than women, to do with specific movements and changes in a nation’s social life; but the regular, ordinary, ceaseless current of that life is carried forward by women: the women whom Isaiah now addresses, were at ease in the midst of the imminent invasion and siege, because the calamity had not yet touched *them*: *their* vintage had not yet failed; the ‘careless daughters’ of Jerusalem still found their wonted luxuries and enjoyments in the palaces of the crowded and joyous city; and by this carelessness of the future

* *Bomaunt of the Rose.*

while the present was so to their taste, they did but reflect, as in a mirror, the like worldly condition of their fathers, husbands, brothers. Therefore the prophet warns them that a day of trouble is soon coming, which will touch them nearly enough ;—a day of social and domestic, as well as of political affliction, when those rich and luxurious ladies will be seen clad in sackcloth, alike indicating the poverty into which they have fallen, and the grief with which they mourn the various other calamities which war, and its attendant famine, have brought into their once prosperous homes. But, again, the promise follows close on the threatening : these woes may last for a long and indefinite time (as the word rendered ‘for ever’ properly implies) ; but at last ‘the spirit will be poured on the nation from on high ;’ the whole land shall be fruitful with righteousness, and with peace the effect of righteousness ; and the wife and the mother, no longer ‘careless,’ but having found the blessedness of trusting in the true source of peace, shall again know, after a better manner than before, what it is to ‘dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in quiet resting-places.’ Yet they must expect this blessing in the midst of humiliations, and on condition of much patient labour ; they must be ready to sow—nay, if need be, to reap—the seed of repentance, and faith, and of a new life, while the storm is still beating down all their former worldly prosperity.

Ophel—‘the hill’—was the name of the hill and fort at the south point of the ridge on which the temple stood, and it is conjectured that the ‘watch-tower’ may have been the ‘flock-tower’ mentioned by Micah* in connection with Ophel. The combination of images of desolation and peace in these verses resembles that at the end of chapter vii.

The fact that this prediction of the impending destruction of Jerusalem has been handed down to us by Isaiah, or his disciples, though they knew that it was not fulfilled ; and that they have themselves taken care to assure us that it was not fulfilled by any event of their own day ; shows clearly that they had little notion that prophecy

* Micah iv. 8.

was the literal prediction of such events, and still less that such literal coincidence between prediction and event, was the test of the speaker's words being a true message from God. At the same time the distinct manner in which Isaiah, like his contemporary Micah in the passage just referred to, pictures the utter ruin of Jerusalem itself, is noticeable for the light it throws on the question whether other descriptions of Jerusalem in ruins can have been conceived and written by Isaiah.

Chapter xxxiii. As the conclusion to this series of woes against the various classes whose sins had brought the Assyrian invasion upon the country as God's appropriate instrument of punishment, succeeds the prophet's triumphant denunciation of still fuller woe upon the great spoiler himself. He has reached the very climax of his power, and no longer conceals his ultimate designs against Judah : and the baffled ambassadors of Hezekiah* return to their master to report with weeping, that Sennacherib indeed had taken the tribute and presents with which they hoped to purchase his departure, but was not the less actively pressing the siege of the fortresses in the south of Judah, which were falling one after another into his hands ; that his hordes of barbarian cavalry were sweeping the whole country, so that it was no longer possible for the peasant to work in the fields, nor for the traveller to pass along the high roads;† and that it was now his avowed intention to carry out the complete policy of Assyrian conquest, by transporting the native inhabitants to some other country, which had suffered the like subjugation, and of which its natives would in turn supply their place.

This, says the prophet, is the very crisis for which we

* 2 Kings xviii. 13—16. This passage does not occur in the otherwise corresponding account in Isaiah xxxvi. ; but the verse now before us seems to allude to this treacherous proceeding of Sennacherib.

† 'The villages and the Arab tribes had not suffered less than the townspeople. The pasha was accustomed to give instructions to those who were sent to collect money, in three words, 'Go, destroy, eat' (pillage); and his agents were not generally backward in entering into the spirit of them. The tribes who had been attacked and plundered, were retaliating upon caravans and travellers, or laying waste the cultivated parts of the pashalic. The villages were deserted, and the roads were little frequented and very insecure.' —Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i. ch. 2.

and to wait, morning after morning : the Egyptian alliance, the diplomacy of Shebna, the humiliation and submission of Hezekiah, have alike proved in vain : all hope of help from man is past, and therefore God's time is come ; the LORD of the nation must, and will, keep his covenant now, which he made with Abraham and his seed for a thousand generations :—' Now will I rise, saith Jehovah : now will I be exalted ; now will I lift up myself ;'—and so signal will be the manifestation of God's power and presence in the destruction of this enemy, that even the sinners and the hypocrites in Zion will be conscience-stricken by it, and be made to know in their hearts, that to fall into the hands of the living and holy Jehovah is more to be dreaded than to come under the power of Sennacherib ; but the righteous, on the other hand, will feel and know that he *can* dwell with the devouring fire, for it is a fire of love, and not of wrath, to him ; and to him, relying wholly on that love, and living according to its law, the deliverance from Sennacherib will be the symbol of his spiritual security. In the day of trouble he has a high and strong fortress, which no enemy can scale, and where neither bread nor water will fail ; and the day of deliverance will soon follow, to restore him to the light of God's countenance, and the blessings of his kingdom,—just as the inhabitants of Jerusalem would, when the siege was raised, see their king Hezekiah again in the robes of state which he had now laid aside for sackcloth or armour, or recovered from the sickness which had perhaps already attacked him ; and would be able to go abroad at will into the distant country from which they were now shut up within the walls and closed gates of Jerusalem.* Then they will look back on the past terror, when they were called on to pay the tribute-money, which was, if possible, to buy off the foreigners whose harsh and unintelligible tongue was heard reckoning its amount and weighing it out, or counting the

* Grotius quotes—

'Ergo omnis longo solvit se Teucra luctu ;
Panduntur portæ ; juvat ire, et Dorica castra
Desertosque videre locos, littusque relictum.
Hic Dolopum manus, hic sævus tendebat Achilles.'

Virg. *Æn.* ii. 26.

towers which still stood between them and their booty ;—as when Rab-shakeh appeared under the walls, and summoned them to surrender. To the present confusion in which the land is involved, shall succeed, not only peace, but a restoration of their national unity. Of this the national festivals were the symbols, because they brought the several tribes together from all parts of the kingdom, and based these occasions of meeting for pleasure or business upon a united national worship, which recognized the LORD of each man and tribe as the Founder and Head of the Commonwealth ; as the Lawgiver and the Judge ; and as the King, in the Majesty of whose person the legislative and executive, the civil and ecclesiastical functions met, as in something greater than any. Only in the Divine King, and not in any one of his earthly and finite representatives, could this union of all characters in a single person be fitly made.

Among the images which crowd the concluding verses of this chapter, we may perhaps, without fancifulness, distinguish an under-current of thoughts suggested by the circumstances of the times at which this prophecy was delivered ; the promised ‘ quiet ’ seems to point to the existing commotion ; the ‘ tabernacle which shall not be taken down,’ reminds us, not only of the fast-founded temple which had replaced the tabernacle, and become the fixed centre of their ‘ solemnities,’ but also of the tents of Sennacherib’s hosts now blackening* the valleys round Jerusalem, but soon to be swept away ‘ like the thistle-down before the whirlwind ;’ the ‘ broad rivers and streams ’ suggest the thought that though Hezekiah’s precautions would have secured the absolute necessary supply of water for the beleaguered city, they felt the want of that abundance of it which is still more grateful in an Eastern climate than in our own : while the promise that ‘ the inhabitant should no longer say, I am sick,’ favours the conjecture that the illness of Hezekiah may have been one instance of the disease which usually attends on the confinement and discomforts of a city shut up against an enemy in the field. In verse 21

* Then, as now, made of black camels’ or goats’ hair. See the accounts of modern travellers ; and Canticles i. 5.

there is a contrast between the chief cities of Egypt and Assyria with their great rivers, and Jerusalem to which Jehovah is the river of life, like that in chapter viii. 6, 7 : and the 'gallant ship' which cannot reach Jerusalem is the same Assyrian power which in verse 23 is described under the same image as run ashore, and so at the mercy even of the lame. In verse 24 we may notice with the more religious commentators the evangelical prophet's anticipation of Him who saith to the *sick* man, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.'

Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. In 2 Chronicles xxviii. 16, 17, we read that in the reign of Ahaz, 'the Edomites smote Judah and carried away captives,' and that this was one of the motives for the fatal application to Assyria for protection. This inroad was, no doubt, like that of the Philistines, a revolt against the authority which in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, as of the other stronger kings, kept this half-civilized race in a tributary state ; and we hardly needed to find 'Huduma,'* like Ashdod and Beth-Ammon, among the list of the countries whose kings, according to Sennacherib's annals (already referred to) brought him 'their accustomed tribute,' after his conquest of Phœnicia, to authorize our extending to Edom the supposition that it, as well as Philistia and Moab, suffered more or less at this period from the Assyrians, and submitted again to dependence on Judah, when Hezekiah's power was re-established after the overthrow of Sennacherib. Still I think most readers will feel that to refer this prophecy (as Grotius and some others do) to such a series of events, is not satisfactory : and that it was a just consciousness of the inadequacy of this interpretation which led Cyril and Theodoret to explain it of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth ; the rabbis to believe that it predicted the downfall of Christian, the Protestants, that of Papal, Rome ; and other commentators to find in it threatenings of the general destruction of the enemies of the Church, of the overthrow of anti-Christ, or even of some anti-Christian power hereafter to rise up in ancient Idumea.† All indicate a sense of the

* See above, p. 242. † Alexander, on the passage.

gravity of the prophecy, beyond what the name of Edom can sustain : and—while the greater part of what is true in the feeling is brought into its proper light by the recognition that the prophet is the enunciator of universal laws which his contemporaries were to apply to the events of their own day, and the following generations to read more clearly by help of the illustration which those events had afforded,—I believe the question, What, then, was the specific event to which the chapters before us allude ? is most simply and most satisfactorily answered by saying, that it is the overthrow of the power of Sennacherib, and that this occurred just before, or just after, the utterance of the prophecy. The use of Edom as a mystical name for the Assyrian domination is in accordance with the other instances of the kind which I have referred to on chap. xxv. 10, and throws light on them, as they do on it ; the general resemblance of this prophecy to that of chapters xiii. xiv. ; its promises expressed under the image of ransomed captives returning through the deserts which separate Judea from Babylonia ; and its place in the book ; all point to this, as Isaiah's own meaning. If it were necessary to find a reason for his selection of this particular type, we might do so in the connection between the image of the great sacrifice and the thought of the countless flocks of Edom.

The Day of Judgment, in which Jehovah gives his decision in the long-pending controversy between Zion the Kingdom of Righteousness, and Assyria the Kingdom of Force, is come : and the Judge of all the earth summons the nations to hear his sentence. It is against the king of mere power, and against the nations themselves, in as far as they have taken mere power to be their law and their god, and are serving in its armies. It is a sentence of death, of extermination of the enemies of God and man, who are to be made a sin-offering to God's justice, that so righteousness may be re-established in the world. Their land shall be soaked with blood : the fire and smoke of that altar shall be like the fire and smoke of Sodom and Gomorrah : the walls of its cities shall be levelled by the ' line of desolation and the plummet of emptiness : ' to

its hereditary nobles shall succeed families of wild beasts and birds, which shall enter into regular possession, generation after generation, and hold their courts in the desolate palaces: Jehovah himself parcels out the land among these invaders, and registers the inheritance of each family (as Joshua did for the children of Israel*), in order that each may be secured in it for ever. I have adopted the 'Satyr' and the 'Night-spectre' in my version, though it cannot be said with certainty that these monsters of popular belief, and not the goat and the owl, are intended. Lilith—the 'Nocturnal'—was believed by the Jews to have been a wife of Adam who became a demon, and, in the form of a beautiful woman, murdered children. But it is not known whether this belief was so old as the time of Isaiah.†

And then follows the 'recompense' of Judah, whose condition the prophet implies, though he beautifully abstains from asserting in detail, to have been much that which is now coming on her enemies. The contrast between Edom wholly possessed by wild animals, and Judah with its human inhabitants restored to their national and religious privileges, is very poetical. In the last chapter every thing was ferine—patriarchs, inheritances, palaces, genealogies: in this (xxxv.), even the earth is human—breaks into shouts of joy, while the forests and fields assist in the triumphal return of the Divine King at the head of his people. The reader will judge, according to his own taste and feeling of the laws of poetic imagination, whether these images only present a picture of the general and complete change from desolation to prosperity: or whether he will say, with Vitranga, that 'the glory of Lebanon,' which consisted in its cedars and other great trees, points to faithful teachers, pastors, and princes; while 'the excellency of Carmel' with its fruit-bearing slopes, and of Sharon with the numerous flocks and herds which fed in its pleasant pastures of grass and flowers, represent the people of the Church and nation. In the prospect of this deliverance, the hands now falling from the attitude of prayer or of action, the knees now tottering for lack of firm faith and

* Joshua xviii. 8—10.

† See Gesenius and Cheyne on this passage.

hope, and the hearts now hurried and impatient from fear, may regain strength ; Jehovah himself is coming to save, and in that day the blind and deaf will see and hear, and the lame and dumb will not only recover their powers, but use them with delight. The mirage—the Hebrew word is that still used by the Arabs—shall become a real lake ; and springs shall break out in the dry, sandy desert,—yet not merely to serve the purpose of providing the jackals with marshy haunts, but in order to supply men and women—the returning captives—with water on their road.*

I have already pointed out† the evidence that there was a real and great deportation of the people of Judah during the times of Isaiah ; and to this the promise of their return in the verses before us, is exactly applicable ; at the same time the prophet here, as elsewhere, connects the restoration from Assyrian captivity with the spiritual regeneration of the restored remnant out of the national worldliness and irreligion and depravity of which he had declared that captivity to be the punishment.

The desert is naturally pathless as well as barren ; but in the day of this universal regeneration, the faint track through the sands shall be replaced by a solid, embanked causeway, which shall not only be there, but be actually used ; as seems to be meant by the words, ‘A highway shall be there, and a way.’ Highways are among the characteristic features of civilization in a country, since they are the means of regular and easy communication between the opposite parts, and especially of all with the capital : but in times of foreign invasion they fall first into the power of the enemy, and are most completely deserted by the inhabitants—‘the highways are unoccupied, and the travellers walk through by-ways :’‡ and in Judea, or any other country where wild beasts still exist, these keep aloof from the roads as long as they are kept open by traffic, but re-appear in them if unfrequented, as in the story of the old prophet who met the lion on the way from Bethel.

* See Mr. Layard’s curious account of the Mesopotamian marshes.—*Nineveh and Babylon*, chap. xxiv.

† Pages 147, 242.

‡ Judges v. 6. Compare the note at p. 293 above.

And this high road shall not only be so well marked and made, that the most ignorant and inexperienced shall keep his way there without difficulty, but neither shall it be appropriated by the unclean heathens, nor stopped by any roaring lion,—any Sennacherib, or spiritual archetype of Sennacherib. It shall be called, for it shall really be, ‘the holy way,’ the road set apart for the use of Jehovah’s own chosen and consecrated people, whom he has redeemed and brought back from bondage : it shall be entirely for *those*. And here again the reader may choose whether he will, with Vitringa and others, explain this way—‘the old path, the good way in which ye shall find rest for your souls,’*—to be the ‘canon of faith and practice,’ embodied in the creeds, sacraments, and other formularies and symbols, as the ways, the methods, by which we go forward to perfection, going up to the city and presence of God, and to communion with him ; or whether he will say, less definitely, but not less forcibly, with Gill,† that it is ‘a way cast up by sovereign grace, which is raised above the mire and dirt of sin, and carries over it and from it.’ I should myself say that the germs—only to be developed through long subsequent ages—of these ideas of Christian theology, may be found in the words in which Isaiah speaks of this restoration of his countrymen and contemporaries from bondage.—‘And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads.’—Of the wonted processions in which kings, village communities, and private persons, went up to the temple at the great feasts, or on other occasions of national or personal thanksgiving after a harvest or a victory, a sickness or a return from captivity, I have lately spoken. So I have of that habit of poets, and of none more than Isaiah, of preferring manifold to single images, which may here authorize us to take all,‡ rather than any one, of the commentators’ explanations of the phrase ‘everlasting joy upon their heads.’ Allusions to the crowns of the king, the priest, and the bridegroom,§

* Jeremiah vi. 16.

† Quoted by Alexander.

‡ Except, indeed, that of Forerius given by Alexander.

§ Canticles iii. 11.

and at the same time to the practice of anointing their heads, and the heads of persons on other festive occasions, with oil,* are quite compatible with the thought that the joy expresses itself in the countenance, or even that it is figured as a radiance of glory about the heads of the redeemed ones.

The more than usually trivial arguments against the genuineness of these two chapters, would hardly deserve even the passing notice which I here give them, if there had been no motive for the criticism, and no subsequent use to be made of its conclusions. But the reader must keep his eyes open to the fact, that if he here consents to abandon positive for conjectural criticism he will inevitably prejudice, and without the evidence, the coming question of the authorship of the last twenty-six chapters of this Book. Positive criticism, such as he would certainly apply to any other book but the Bible, will tell him that there is no ground for doubting that the prophecy before us is by Isaiah; nor for perplexing himself with such hypotheses of the speculative criticism as that these two chapters do not make one whole; that their style is diffuse and verbose; that they are full of extravagant expressions of revengeful malice; that they are the work of a writer long after the times of Isaiah; and composed by him as a sort of summary of chapters xl. to lxvi., which are to be ascribed to another unknown author. Let the true student examine the case thoroughly for himself.

* Compare Psalm xlv. 7; Eccl. ix. 8; Isaiah lxi. 3.

CHAPTER XX.

ISAIAH XXXVI., XXXVII.—HISTORICAL EVENTS OF SENNACHERIB'S INVASION AND RETREAT—HIS LETTER—HOW ANSWERED.—UNCONSCIOUS GENIUS IN THE NARRATIVE.—RAB-SHAKEH'S THEOLOGY.—ISAIAH'S INSPIRATION.—'THE INCARNATE WRATH OF GOD.'—ZION'S DEFIANCE.—THE 'SIGN' OF THE SPONTANEOUS CROPS.—THE DESTROYING ANGEL.—SETHOS DELIVERED BY VULCAN.—GERMAN WAR OF FREEDOM.—HISTORY TEACHES A BELIEF IN PROVIDENCE.—NIEBUHR.—GROTE.

THERE has been much discussion as to whether the historical narrative in the following chapters, or its slightly varying counterpart in the 2nd Book of Kings, is the original ; or whether both are taken from some third work now lost, and which may also have supplied the materials for the different account of the same events in the 2nd Book of Chronicles ; and what was the share of Isaiah himself in the actual or supposed narratives. We are told* that he wrote a complete history of the reign of Uzziah ; and if he wrote that of Hezekiah also, it would be quite intelligible that the main part of this should, on the one hand, be incorporated into the Book of Kings, and on the other, into this book of his own prophecies, with such omissions and amplifications as the purposes of each required. The opinion that this was done in the latter case by some compiler and editor of the prophet's writings, has its advocates : but I persuade myself that, in proportion to the reader's study of the book as a whole, and as we have it, he has seen indications of a unity of design in the arrangement of the several prophecies, and of the various pieces of narrative connecting them ; and has consequently found that arrangement so interesting and important, for the light it throws on each part, and for the epic character it gives to the whole, as to be worthy

* 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

of Isaiah himself, and perhaps above the reach of any of his successors of whom we know anything.

It may here be convenient to bring together the successive parts of the history of this period which I have already referred to in connection with the successive discourses of Isaiah, and to complete them with what still remains to be said of the events now taking place; and of which the Hebrew narratives, that of Herodotus, and the Assyrian inscriptions, are the remaining records.* Sargon, like his predecessors Tiglath-Pileser and Shalmaneser, had broken up the confederacy of the Western and Southern powers, and reduced them to submission. But his assassination† would have given them the opportunity to revolt; and after his son Sennacherib had reduced like revolts nearer home he proceeded, in his third campaign, to Syria, where Phœnicia, Philistia, and Judah, if not other neighbouring nations, had thrown off the Assyrian yoke, and had entered again into alliance with Egypt and Ethiopia against the common foe. But the Egyptians and Ethiopians, as usual, were too slow for the rapid action of the Assyrians. Elulœus, King of Tyre and Sidon, fled to Cyprus at the approach of Sennacherib, and all the cities of Phœnicia submitted to him. He made Ithobal king in Elulœus's stead, and there received homage and tribute from him as well as from the kings of Arvad, Ashdod, Ammon, Moab, Edom, and others, who had apparently been too prudent to join in the revolt. The kings of Ascalon and Ekron, who were perhaps actually appointed by the Assyrian king,‡ would have remained faithful, as the king of Ashdod seems to have done; but the nobles and people were not so disposed. At Ascalon they seem to have substituted Zidka for their former king Sar-ludari, and at Ekron they put their king Padi in irons and sent him prisoner to Hezekiah, who like them was in revolt, and relying on the Egyptian and Ethiopian alliance for support. But these allies still delayed, while Sennacherib advanced.

* Herodotus ii. 141; 2 Kings xviii., xix.; 2 Chron. xxxii.; Isaiah xxxvi., xxxvii. The Inscriptions are given above, pp. 194, 239.

† Schrader, *Keilinschriften u. d. A.T.*, pp. 268, 331.

‡ Sar-ludari is an Assyrian name. Schrader, *Keilinschriften*, p. 73.

He took all the cities of Zidka—Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Benabarak, and Azur—by storm, sent him and all his house prisoners to Assyria, and put Sar-ludari again on the throne. He took Ekron, punished its rebellion with severity, and brought back king Padi, whom he had compelled Hezekiah to give up to him. And, when the fortified cities of Judah fell, one after another, and the open country was ravaged by the Assyrian armies, and still no help came from Egypt, and Sennacherib was lying before the great southern fortress of Lachish* which ought to have covered the allied armies, had they arrived in time,—then Hezekiah, too, found himself obliged to yield; and he sent to the great king, ‘saying, I have offended, return from me, that which thou puttest upon me I will bear;’ and he paid the tribute thereupon required by Sennacherib, stripping the temple and his palace of their treasures to do so. Sennacherib took the gold and silver, but immediately afterwards sent an army to Jerusalem to demand its surrender, with the avowed purpose of deporting the inhabitants as soon as possible. Isaiah reproaches him† with his treachery, and his breach of a treaty which must have promised a cessation of hostilities on Hezekiah’s submission and payment of the tribute: but the kings of Egypt and Ethiopia were at last advancing, and Sennacherib must have felt that he had strong motives for securing himself against the possibility of a flank attack

* Lachish, and Libnah (which Sennacherib besieged after taking Lachish) were Canaanite cities in the south of Judah, the kings of which were conquered by Joshua. Lachish was fortified by Rehoboam, and was one of the remaining fortresses of Judah in the time of Jeremiah. It has been conjectured that the royal chariots and horses were kept there. Libnah is mentioned as having revolted from Joram. (Joshua x. 3 ff.; xii. 11, 15; xv. 39, 42; 2 Kings viii. 22; xiv. 19; xviii. 17; 2 Chron. xi. 9; xxv. 27; xxxii. 9; Nehemiah xi. 30; Jeremiah xxxiv. 7; Micah i. 13.) Eusebius and Jerome place both these cities near Eleutheropolis. The modern Um-Lakis preserves the name, if not the site of the ancient Lachish.

Mr. George Smith says, in his account of this campaign of Sennacherib, ‘He captured forty-six of the fenced cities of Judah, including Lachish, and there is a series of slabs from the wall of one of the halls of his palace, on which is depicted the storming of this city, while Sennacherib is represented sitting on a throne in the vicinity of Lachish, and receiving the prisoners and spoil.’ *Notices of Palestine, in Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, October, 1872. Mr. Layard gives a woodcut of this representation, *Nineveh and Babylon* (1853), p. 150. And Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*, Article *Lachish*, gives copies of some other parts of these slabs, from Layard’s *Monuments of Nineveh*, 2nd series, plate 21.

† Chapter xxxiii. 1, 7, 8.

from Jerusalem while he was giving battle, or perhaps a series of battles, to the armies now coming up from the south: he would not trust Hezekiah's recent and reluctant submission, nor would he have much scruple about breaking his own engagements with one whom he may have suspected to be still in communication with the late allies of Judah, and his own immediate enemies.

A detachment from the main army appeared under the walls of Jerusalem, commanded by the Tartan, or Assyrian General, together with the Chief of the Eunuchs, and the Chief Cup-bearer, who may have been civil officers of Sennacherib, and sent by him to conduct the negotiations.* If Shebna had been still in power, he might perhaps have yielded; but Eliakim, whose policy was that of Isaiah—the policy of absolute reliance upon Jehovah—was now first in Hezekiah's councils; and, by the advice of Isaiah, the reply was a defiance of the king and his army, in the name of Jehovah. Sennacherib, meanwhile, had taken Lachish, and was besieging the neighbouring city of Libnah, when Rabshakeh re-joined him there, to report the failure of his mission. Tirhakeh, king of Ethiopia, with his Egyptian allies or vassals, was now at hand; and before the battle Sennacherib again sent a summons to Hezekiah, by a letter in which he again warned him of the consequences of trusting either in Egypt and Ethiopia, or in his God. He then took up his position at Altakeh, probably a few miles north of Lachish, and there gave battle to Tirhakeh and his great army, with its Egyptian chariots, cavalry, and bowmen. He was, according to his own account, victorious, taking many prisoners. But his army now met with a reverse to which he indeed—as might be expected—makes no allusion, but the fact of which has been recorded both in the Egyptian account preserved by Herodotus, and in those of the Hebrew historians. We

* Tartan, Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, are considered by the most recent authorities to be not proper names but official titles—the Commander-in-chief, the Chief of the eunuchs, and the Chief cup-bearer. Tartan is Assyrian, the other two Hebrew. Dr. Schrader suggests that Rabsaris may be the Hebrew equivalent for the Assyrian *Rab-lub*, Chief of the harem, a title found in the Official Lists, and Rabshakeh a Hebrew substitute for *Rab-sak*, which would mean not Chief cup-bearer, but Chief of the military staff.—*Keilinschriften*, u. d. A. T. p. 198.

are left in doubt as to the exact nature of the disaster,* or the place of its occurrence. Sennacherib may have threatened Pelusium, as well as Jerusalem, as his letter to Hezekiah shows that it was his intention to invade Egypt: but, as he makes no reference in his annals to any such advance after the battle he records, it is perhaps more probable that the disaster occurred in the plains of Philistia, and that there may be confusion on this point, as well as on that of the cause of the disaster itself, in the account preserved by Herodotus. Sennacherib, indeed, instead of recording any reverse, makes the conquest of Ekron and the submission of Hezekiah as the consequences—and the triumphant and adequate consequences—of his victory over the Egyptians and Ethiopians, and winds up the account of this his third campaign with the detail of the spoils which Hezekiah had been compelled to surrender to him. As he took all the cities of Judah except Jerusalem, and overran the whole land, he may have obtained all the plunder he recites: but if so, it was probably plunder, and not tribute. The tribute is more likely to have been the specified amount of talents of gold and silver (whether the latter was three or eight hundred is not important), and to have been paid under the circumstances, and at the time, stated in the Hebrew accounts. If the events had occurred in the order given in Sennacherib's Inscriptions, and had been as successful as he desires to imply, he would not have left Hezekiah in possession of his kingdom, nor would he have failed to carry out his purpose of invading Egypt. Instead of this, he does not appear to have attempted any farther interference with Egypt or the Western nations during the rest of his reign. It is simpler and easier to reconcile the conflicting points of the Hebrew and Egyptian with the Assyrian accounts, by assuming some such designed exaggeration and distortion of the facts in Sennacherib's boastful inscription, than by the supposition of two distinct campaigns, one of which is unrecorded by the Hebrew, and the other by the Assyrian, historian.†

* See Knobel on the passage, which he discusses with his usual precision.

† Mr. George Smith (in the *Notices of Palestine* quoted in the note to page 304) says of Sennacherib—'late in his reign, probably about B.C. 688, he made

In this, as in all histories, modern no less than ancient, details remain obscure and doubtful. We may not be able to say whether Rab-shakeh withdrew the troops which had accompanied him to Jerusalem, when he himself returned to Sennacherib's head-quarters; or whether—because he was only an ambassador, and Tartan the general, or for any other reason—they were left behind to begin the siege: whether it was the destruction of this detached army, by plague already begun within the walls of Jerusalem, or by some more sudden disaster; or whether it was some more general catastrophe, that compelled Sennacherib to fly to his own land: nor decide other like questions, for and against which much has been, and may be, said. But the careful examination of the alternatives (for which I refer the reader to the commentators themselves) enables us to get all the general light we require for a distinct view of the great political features of the period: though this examination will show us that there are dark patches of shadow, or undefined marks, where we had hoped to make out specific forms on a nearer approach, still we find that, on again retiring to the right point of distance for seeing the whole as the picture it is, and is meant to be, it tells its story quite well; and that we may learn from it all we need to know. We see that in the regular advance of the Assyrian power, it had reached the point at which Sennacherib could cease to temporize with Judah, and might proceed completely to absorb the tributary state into the empire. The kingdom of Samaria had already followed the fate of Damascus in this respect: the submission of Phœnicia and Philistia had not only opened the road to Egypt, but also turned the

another expedition to Palestine.' This is inferred from an Inscription of Ezar-haddon, who says that his father Sennacherib formerly conquered the city of Adumu of the Arabs, of which Hazailu was king; while Sennacherib himself names Melikram as the king of Edom who submitted to him in his third campaign. But this would be no proof of a later campaign, even if Adumu means Edom, which Dr. Schrader denies. Professor Finzi assumes that there was such a second expedition, but adds, that hitherto the inscriptions have only borne testimony to the first war; and Dr. Schrader says, with a direct reference to Mr. Smith's supposition, that nothing is found in the Assyrian accounts of any second campaign in Syria; and that the assumed historical necessity for such a campaign rests on a misconception of the right mode of reconciling the several statements.—*Keilinschriften*, u. d. A. T. pp. 192, ff.

position of Judah : and if Sennacherib thought it well to try and intimidate Hezekiah and his people into surrendering a city which even he would have had difficulty in taking until they were starved out, we may infer from the insolent way in which he still avows his ultimate intentions if they did surrender, that he really had no fear for the result, even though he should be obliged to fight Tirhakeh, with Judah unconquered and assisting the Egyptians. The justness of the belief, which (as we learn from Herodotus) was held by the Egyptians as well as by the Hebrews, that nothing but an interposition of God's hand could at this moment have broken the great Assyrian power, is confirmed by this conduct of Sennacherib and his messenger no less than by the despair of help from human counsels or arms which Hezekiah manifests on receiving the report of the message, and the letter by which it was afterwards followed. There is some truth in the observation, though it may have been made scoffingly, that Hezekiah's character on the present occasion resembles that of David in its devotion more than in its energy ; for the powers of the Hebrew monarchy, and its reigning king, *were* too feeble to resist that incarnation of universal despotism, if they could not obtain a form and degree of support which David did not need for the assertion of the independence and superiority of his kingdom, among the surrounding nations. It was true, as Sennacherib boasted, that a power had arisen against which nation after nation had found its faith, and institutions, and arms, unable to make any head : and if the utter destruction which had come upon Ephraim, no less than upon the peoples and kings whose names the Assyrian recites in his letter, exactly in the fashion in which he recited and we now read them on the obelisks or bulls at Nineveh, was not to fall now on Judah also, it must be by the help of a stronger hand than had interfered for any of them. The conviction that the LORD of Israel was strong enough, and no less willing, to keep his covenant by defending the nation against all its enemies, had no doubt supported Hezekiah hitherto : but it would have been insufficient, in this moment, to meet the terrible feeling that he was now in the actual presence and power of the

representative of irresistible arbitrary force, unless a higher truth had come to sustain this lower one, and he had realized (as men only do realize in some extremity of their own helplessness) that there was an Absolute Will retaining the mastery over that irresistible force, however crushing it might seem ; and that the LORD of Israel who 'dwelt between the cherubims,' was himself the God, the only God, of all the kingdoms of the earth, and so of this Assyrian kingdom among the rest. And then we see how this truth, which the pious Hezekiah had known and acknowledged before, but which now came to him with all the reality of life and death, begets a likeness to itself in the mind which it informs ; for just as the idea of, and faith in, the LORD of the nation, expands into, yet remains a living part of, the higher consciousness that he is the LORD who made and still rules the heavens and earth, so Hezekiah's patriotic interest in, and prayer for, the preservation of his own people, expands itself into a desire for the honour of God, as its ultimate object : ' Now, therefore, O Jehovah our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even Thou only.'

We are so familiar from childhood with these Scripture narratives, and they are so unpretending in their form, that it is usually only after some distinct effort of examination by help of commentaries or lexicons, that we notice (as we do then notice) the marks which they abound with, of unconscious genius in the selection of the really characteristic points of the story. The short peremptory letter of Sennacherib, not only brings out the acts of Hezekiah which we have just been considering, but also the more vulgar insolence of Rab-shakeh, who will not give Hezekiah the title of king at all, while he rings the changes upon 'my master, the great king, the king of Assyria.' And again the address of Rab-shakeh to Eliakim and his fellow-ministers, is artfully differenced from that in which, in defiance of their request, he appeals to the men on the wall : with the latter he makes the surrender a question of mere selfish consideration, how to escape the famine which is likely to accompany the siege. and to have plenty to eat

and drink thereafter ; while to the ministers of state he urges their utter want of power to resist, and, moreover, condescends to argue (on their own ground, as he supposes) the theological question, whether Hezekiah can hope for the support of a God whose altars he has taken away,* with a patronizing scepticism which singularly resembles the style in which the sceptic in our own day often undertakes to enlighten some one who has spent years in the study and practice of the Christian creed and life, as to the consequences of his own belief,—wholly unconscious that his talk is as much beside the mark as if he were to set right a Newton or a Laplace, though himself unacquainted with the first elements of physical science. The theology and the politics of both Rab-shakeh's speeches, and his inability to understand that his hearers were actuated by a sentiment of patriotism, as well as by those other interests or superstitions which he thinks he meets so cleverly, may be compared and contrasted with Hezekiah's address to his people, and their reception of it,† as well as with his prayer to God, and his message to Isaiah.

I am as unable as those before me, to suggest any reason why the communications between Hezekiah and Isaiah were carried on by message, upon the occasions specified in the text. The dispute whether verse 7 of chapter xxxvii. is a miraculous prediction, or an interpolation after the event, may be superseded by the consideration that men would not differ from the brutes that perish, if they had no power of anticipating the future from their knowledge of the past and present. The most foolish man has something of this power, as to those events in which he is vitally interested, though he may exercise it rather as an instinct than as a deliberate act of reason ; and much more the wise man. A man with such large 'discourse of reason,' with such original and such cultivated genius as Isaiah, is, indeed, God's most wonderful creation ; but I cannot think it does honour to the Creator to suppose that the Hebrew prophet—being such as he was, and acquainted not only with the general laws which

* See note to page 5.

† Quoted in page 246 above.

govern the rise and fall of despotisms, and connect a tyrant's failure in the field with violent death at home, but also with many details of Sennacherib's position and circumstances unknown to us—could not have predicted the fate of the Assyrian in the terms he does, without some special suspension of the ordinary, regular, working of the prophet's inspired mind. That Isaiah was inspired, that these utterances of his human wisdom and knowledge were all originated, sustained, and directed by the actually present, indwelling, spirit of God, and that the habitual prayer of faith was the means of keeping up this communion of the prophet with his God, I am anxious to assert in the most explicit words I can find; and this, not to prove my own orthodoxy to myself or others, but as a point of positive (as distinguished from hypothetical) criticism, which must be recognized to be a *fact*, before any complete literary and philosophical examination of Isaiah's writings is possible: and such a recognition of Isaiah's inspiration is not less hindered by the hypothesis of a miracle than by that of an interpolation. And that each hypothesis is opposed to the facts, no less than to the spirit, of the narrative, will appear if we compare the historical detail of Sennacherib's overthrow and death as given, after the event, in verses 36—38 of chapter xxxvii., with the general expressions of Isaiah both in his first short answer to Hezekiah, and in the longer rhythmical one: for a miraculous communication, whether real or forged, should surely have contained those details, in order effectually to answer its purpose; and if Isaiah had supposed that his first words did convey such an oracular prediction, he would hardly have omitted to repeat and dwell upon them in his subsequent prophecy, which he expressly calls 'the word which Jehovah hath spoken concerning Sennacherib, king of Assyria;'—unless, indeed, we suppose that on both occasions the prophet was a mere automaton emitting articulate sounds.

The word in verse 7 which our Authorized Version translates by 'blast'—apparently understanding it to mean a pestilential blast, or a violent simoom or other storm—is, I think, better rendered 'spirit,' with the wider sense

that Jehovah will put forth the power of his spirit to master him, in some way not defined.

When Rab-shakeh asserts, in his master's name, 'Jehovah said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it,' we are reminded both of Timour's declaration that he was the incarnate wrath of God, and also of the less religious belief of Napoleon and other military despots in their destiny. Yet Sennacherib's self-confidence is essentially atheistic; and is in this respect in accordance with all we know of military despotisms, modern no less than ancient, when they are at their climax: the old forms of worship will be retained, like the old forms of government, where they do not interfere with, or are even useful instruments of, the despot; but when the physical force he wields is become the only real law, and no appeal remains from it to duties and rights, nor to an Absolute Justice the source of these, he himself becomes—for is he not?—the god, or rather anti-god of those he rules. But the confidence of the virgin daughter of Zion in the strength of her LORD, and her consequent scornful defiance, are not less bold and peremptory than the Assyrian's: and the fact that her LORD makes her cause his own, and that he has been insulted in her person, makes it the more certain that he will answer Hezekiah's prayer, and avenge his own honour.

It is probable that the word 'virgin' here, as in the usage of other languages and times, implies that the city is impregnable: and that Lebanon here, as elsewhere,* stands for the land of Israel, having been possibly suggested by the thought of the success with which the Assyrians employed their cavalry in a country where it might have been expected to prove only an incumbrance, so that they seemed as if they could literally take the precipitous and wooded heights of Lebanon itself with their multitude of chariots and horses: the tall cedars and choice fir-trees, the border-heights, and the garden-like, or fruit-bearing, forests, are images, with more or less special allusion, of the princes and people, the temple, the cities, and the cultivated country of Judea. The force

* Jerem. xxii. 23; Ezek. xvii. 3. 12; Habak. ii. 17; Zech. xi. 1.

of the words of this and the next (24th and 25th) verses is much greater—and quite in harmony with English idiom—if we preserve the distinction of tenses in the original: the Assyrian *has* scaled the impregnable mountains and forests, he *will* take actual possession of all that he finds therein; he *has* led his vast armies through the great deserts between Babylonia and Egypt, digging and drinking water, and he *will* tread the streams of Egypt dry, like so many puddles,—the drought and the flood being equally under his control.* There is a like mixture of symbol and fact in the one verse and the other, while the whole is presented to the imagination as a picture or vision.

Such is the boast which Sennacherib has ventured to utter against the Holy One of Israel. Observe the emphasis of the expression: the Holy One of Israel is a Being whose Majesty no one violates with impunity, and who, if he be not sanctified by men, sanctifies himself in judgments.† Isaiah had at an earlier stage of the Assyrian conquests referred to these, we know habitual, boasts, and had replied to them that the conquerors were merely the instruments for carrying out God's predetermined and pre-arranged plan:‡ and he makes the same reply again now, only that there he dwelt on the corrective discipline to which Zion was to be submitted according to that plan while here he assumes that the discipline has wrought its work, and that the scourge is done with. On comparing the images in verse 27 with those in verses 30, 31, we see that the actual devastation of the cultivated country suggests that under-current of thought which is more or less traceable in all poetry; though the images themselves, in the first verse, are those of grass and green crops, which are so feeble as to fall at once before the scythe, or even

*

‘Cum cesserit omnis

Obsequiis natura meis? Subsidere nostris

Sub pedibus montes; arescere vidimus amnes:—

Fregi Alpes, galeisque Padum victricibus hausì.’

Claudian's Speech of Alaric: *De Bello Getic.* 526.

‘Credimus altos

Defecisse amnes, epotaque flumina Medo.’

Juv. *Sat.* x. 176. Quoted by Lowth and Gesenius.

† Compare chapters v. 16; x. 17; xxix. 23.

‡ Chapter x.

to die of themselves in a few weeks ;—nay, to heighten the emphasis, of the still feeblér weeds which grow up in the chance dust and moisture on the housetops, and the corn which is sickly from its root. The following threat, of curbing and leading Sennacherib like a brute beast, is singularly illustrated by the bas-reliefs of Holwan and Khorsabad, which represent prisoners actually led in triumph by a hook through the nose and lips.

The 'sign' which Isaiah goes on to promise, in terms apparently made obscure in order to excite consideration, seems best explained to mean, that the Assyrian devastations of the open country of the Jews had prevented the regular cropping of the land, and consequently the regular harvest, for the current year : and as the enemy was still in occupation of the country, there was no possibility of ploughing and sowing in preparation for the next year either ; but the season after that, the prophet confidently asserts that they would be able to sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.* The promise is thus brought into strict harmony with the previous threat,† that 'the vintage should fail, and the gathering not come,' for a time which we must understand Isaiah there to say would be considerable,—whether we understand the 'days above a year' of the original to mean 'more than a full year,' or look only at the general expressions in the following verses of the passage referred to. That what Isaiah meant there, he may have meant now, might seem answer enough to the objection, that those who give this explanation of the prediction of the loss of two harvests, must suppose the prophet to have expected the Assyrian occupation to last much longer than the history shows that it did : but the objection itself vanishes, if we recollect that

* Thus the Spartan envoys express their sympathy with the Athenians who, in bearing the brunt of the Persian invasion, 'had already been deprived of two harvests : ' where Mr. Grote observes that as this was spoken before the invasion of Mardonius, the loss of *two* crops must mean the loss of the harvest of the past summer, together with the seed of the autumn immediately following ; and that the advice of Themistocles to his countrymen, that 'every one should repair his house and attend to sowing his ground,' must have been found impracticable in most cases to carry into effect during that autumn.—Herod. viii. 142 : Grote's *History of Greece*, v. 202.

† Isaiah xxxii. 10.

the movements of great armies against, and over, a country defended by deserts, and mountains, and fortified cities; the political negotiations which preceded and followed these movements; and the recovery of depopulated villages, and wasted cornfields and vineyards; were not events which could begin and end within any such short space as it takes to write or read of them. Instances of two, and even three crops from one sowing are mentioned by Strabo, and are also said to occur in California at the present time.

This sign is analogous in character to those of 'Immanuel' and 'Maher-shalal-hash-baz,' as well as to Noah's Rainbow, and to that given to Moses at the Burning Bush;* and, we may add, to those of the water and the bread and wine of the Christian sacraments, and of all other symbols, of which the purpose is, not to establish faith in a future miracle because a present one has been wrought, but to supply such an outward and visible sign of the accompanying inward spiritual grace, as will, from the very constitution of man's being (of soul and body united), help him to realize the latter, as he could not do by any naked mental effort. And the thing here signified has itself an inward and an outward part: for, as the spontaneously sowed and multiplied corn and fruit will be the foundation and materials of the regular cultivation of the third year, so will the deserted villages and farms be replenished with the survivors of those who have for the present found refuge within the walls of Jerusalem; and both the one and the other will be the types of that 'holy seed,' the existence of which in the corrupt nation was made known to Isaiah at his first calling to the prophetic office, when he was told that he was to watch and wait, with the long patience of the husbandman, for the growing up of that seed, after the hard ground had been broken up, and the rampant weeds rooted out, by the ploughshare of repeated national calamity. 'The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this. . . . For I will defend this city to save it, saith Jehovah, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.' David was the personal

* Exodus iii. 12.

representative of the faith and righteousness of the nation, in the day that God renewed with him his covenant to continue the name and the kingdom of Israel for ever ;* and that covenant God would keep, as long as there were any who in heart were of David's race, for their and David's sake :—for their faith and righteousness were not the less to be rewarded because these were the free gift of God, and the result of his choosing them, and not of their choosing him.

I do not attempt to add to the discussion of the questions, whether 'the angel of Jehovah,' that minister of his, which did his pleasure on the Assyrians, was a tempest, a hot wind, a pestilence, or some other of those powers of nature which, when employed by God's providence, are usually called his angels by the Hebrews ; whether there is any such improbability in the more explicit statement in the Book of Kings,—that this great multitude were destroyed in a single night—as demands that it should be restricted by the terms of the account before us, and of that in the Chronicles ; and whether the Egyptian record of the same catastrophe, as preserved by Herodotus, throws any further light upon it. A positive determination of them is not at all necessary to our substantial understanding of the case ; though, of course, every fact of history, however minute, may have its value, when ascertained to be a fact ; and it is unfortunate that the modern commentators on this passage should show so much disposition to bend their criticism to a foregone conclusion, orthodox or rationalist. The story of Herodotus seems to me erroneously called a transfer of the scene of the event to Egypt, and a substitution of the names of Sethos and Vulcan for Hezekiah and Jehovah : Sennacherib's army was menacing Egypt as well as Judea at the time ; and he did, shortly after, beat 'the kings of Egypt with the horsemen and footmen belonging to the King of Ethiopia, of which the numbers could not be counted ;' and a detachment, like that sent to Jerusalem, may have appeared at Pelusium : and certainly the matter of interest and thankfulness to Sethos was

* 2 Samuel vi. 12, 13.

that he and his country, not that Hezekiah and the Jews, were delivered by the providential destruction of their common enemy. And though we admit as probable, nay certain, that all the coatings of the superstition which represented the Egyptian god Vulcan as the deliverer, were not the additions of a later priestcraft; though we allow that this was more or less the belief of Sethos himself, and that he could not 'speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts,' with that clearness of heart and mind with which Isaiah had foretold that the Egyptians should 'know Jehovah in the day that he sent a saviour to deliver them;' still the student who has an eye for the good, as well as for the evil, of the religions of the world, will not fail to distinguish in the narrative of Herodotus, the record of a true though imperfect recognition by the Egyptians that neither Sennacherib, nor Tirhakeh, but an invisible and divine LORD, was the real master of Egypt and its destinies, and that this providential deliverance was so clear an instance of his rule, that it should awaken a sentiment of piety in every one who learnt the story:—*ἐς ἐμέ τις ὀρέων, εὐσεβὴς ἔστω.**

Sennacherib's account of this war, if taken with the qualifications proposed, relieves the student of Isaiah's prophecies and policy of a certain difficulty. The notices in these and the corresponding chapters, taken with the account of Herodotus, and the inscription on a temple at Thebes which, according to Wilkinson, records Tirhakeh's successful opposition to Sennacherib, indicated the most probable supposition to be that the Assyrian king retreated from the Ethiopian, either after sustaining, or without waiting for, a battle in the south-west of Judea. And then to bring this into harmony with Isaiah's steady denunciation of the alliance of Israel with Egypt, which might thus seem to have succeeded, instead of failing as he predicted, we had to suppose that Sennacherib's boast, that Tirhakeh would not be able to help Hezekiah, was

* This mention of Sethos, or Zet, by Herodotus, as the contemporary of Sennacherib, and therefore of Tirhakeh, is in favour of those who hold the Tanitic and Ethiopian dynasties to have been synchronous: M. Bunsen supposes Sethos to have been put instead of Tirhakeh, by some inadvertence of the Greek historian.

well founded when uttered ; and that the Ethiopian army would not have ventured to attack that of Sennacherib, unless the latter had first been weakened by the great and sudden destruction effected in it by the immediate hand of God. This would indeed be a sufficient fulfilment of the spirit of the prophet's language, rightly understood ; and we might be content if we had no better. But Sennacherib's own account, that he fought and beat the countless hosts of Egypt and Ethiopia at Altakeh, suits the prophet's anticipations better ; while the after abandonment of his advantage by Sennacherib meets the requirements of the narrative of Herodotus, at least as well as the other supposition.

The revolt of Babylon and of the Medes, and perhaps of other dependencies not mentioned in history as these are, concurred to weaken the Assyrian empire of the sword at this period ; and Sennacherib 'decamped, departed, returned, remained at Nineveh,'—a description which has been compared to that of Catiline by Cicero—*abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit*,—without troubling Judea again. His inscriptions record the events of five subsequent campaigns, chiefly against Babylon and Elam, and none in the West. Sir Henry Rawlinson, M. Oppert, and Dr. Schrader see indications in these inscriptions that Sennacherib had suffered some reverse the nature of which he does not mention ; and I have for the most part followed the view of the last of these authorities in my own argument on the subject.*

I have already shown, at so great length, how the successive events of the War of Freedom affected the minds of the more thoughtful and religious Germans, that I must here content myself with referring the reader to the terms in which Niebuhr maintains that there had never in any age been a more signal manifestation of God's hand than in their final deliverance 'when the need was the sorest, when all human wisdom and strength had failed.'† The

* *Outline*, p. 25 ; *Inscriptions des Sargonides*, p. 40 ; *Keilinschriften*, u. d. A. T. 191 ff.

† 'The hand of God in Prussia's deliverance from a foreign yoke,' in Niebuhr's *Life and Letters*, iii. 115.

same writer observes in his *Lectures on Roman History*,* that there are occasional points of time at which the whole course of history, and of the fates of nations, is decided by some event which does not grow necessarily out of previous events, and which a reasonable man can only explain by referring to the providence of God. Mr. Grote, on the other hand, recognizes, but leaves unexplained, such master-events of history. He points out, that if Darius had not—contrary to probable expectation—delayed the first Persian invasion till the Greeks had had twenty years for efficient preparations, they must have been overwhelmed, and Greece, such as it has been to the world, would never have existed; and he draws the general inference, ‘that the history of any nation, considered as a sequence of causes and effects affording applicable knowledge, requires us to study not merely real events, but also imminent contingencies:’† but there he stops. And when Niebuhr takes me a step further, and shows me a ‘cause affording applicable knowledge,’ where Mr. Grote only indicated an unexplained ‘effect,’ I must think that Niebuhr’s is the more completely scientific criticism—the criticism which takes the most complete cognizance of all the facts. The study of the complicated workings of a steam-engine, with its arrangements for supplying its own water, oiling its own wheels, changing vertical to horizontal movements, and so on, would lead me to admit rather than to deny that the hand of the ever-watchful engineer might occasionally intervene to give the machine some new application, or to prevent some hideous crash; least of all could I pass such explanation in silence, as though it had no interest to a rational man.

* *English Translation*, vol. ii. p. 146.

† *History of Greece*, iv. 353.

CHAPTER XXI.

ISAIAH XXXVIII.—THE SICKNESS OF HEZEKIAH—IMPORTANCE OF HIS LIFE TO HIS NATION—HIS DESIRE OF RECOVERY NOT PURELY SELFISH.—FEAR OF DEATH IN OLD TIMES.—CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.—THE SIGN OF THE SHADOW ON THE SUN-DIAL.—TWO ACCOUNTS—THE CONTEMPORARY ONE NOT MIRACULOUS.—THE BIBLE TO BE TREATED LIKE OTHER BOOKS.—NOT SO TREATED BY SCEPTICS.—THE HYMN OF HEZEKIAH.

‘IN those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.’—It is said that the treatment of plague-boils in the East still corresponds with that prescribed by Isaiah on this occasion ; and from this, as well as from the other possible allusions (already noticed) to the existence of pestilence in Jerusalem and in Sennacherib’s army, it has been suggested that this deadly sickness was the plague ; and that it occurred before the country was freed from the enemy is the natural inference from the words in verse 6. But some commentators maintain the other hypothesis, and Delitzsch says that the Hebrew word *שָׁרִי* means an abscess, and never a plague-spot. Either way, the absence of any allusion to the deliverance in Hezekiah’s song is one of those facts which, in historical documents, are so perpetually contradicting our notions of what was likely to have been said or done, and which teach us within what narrow limits all deductive criticisms must be kept if they are not to become mere speculations of the fancy.

This sickness and recovery of Hezekiah from the gates of death, was an event of such national importance as made it properly find a place here, as well as in the historical books. For the throne of David, as far as we know, was without an heir at this moment ; and Hezekiah’s death might have been followed by some such interregnum, anarchy, and seizure of the crown by a soldier, as hastened the downfall of the kingdom of Ephraim. Such

a failure in the succession, in times of national depression and disorganization, would be pregnant with evil even in England now ; and we must remember that in Judea then, as in all Eastern and patriarchal governments still, the personal character of the hereditary sovereign was of an importance to the people which it has to a great degree, though not utterly, lost in every country of Europe except Russia. Let us contrast the character and acts of Hezekiah with those of his immediate predecessor and successor, and we shall see of what moment it was that the interval by which his reign separated theirs should be prolonged fifteen years ; and especially when the country needed a hand disciplined by experience and guided by faith to recover it from the moral and material disorganization into which (as we know from Isaiah's discourses) it had fallen during the Assyrian supremacy. And thus this crisis in the personal life of Hezekiah—the fact cannot be denied, though here, as in so many like cases, our philosophy cannot trace out the connection of cause and effect—became the type and symbol of the like crisis in the life of the nation : it, too, was sick unto death, and was granted a new period of life by God, after it was past the help of man.

And therefore it will rather argue our own low moral standard than our understanding of Hezekiah's state of mind, if we see nothing but selfishness and weakness in his lamentations at the prospect of death. Selfishness and weakness we may find there, for in whom are they not found in the hour of extreme suffering?—but we may also find patriotism and piety in his words. Ever since his accession to the throne, and no doubt long before, Hezekiah had been possessed by the idea that he was called by Jehovah to reform and restore the nation : he had been labouring in the work for fourteen years, amidst the greatest difficulties ; and now all was to be broken off prematurely ; he was neither to be permitted to go on working for the natural 'residue of his years,' nor to hand over a finished task to his children, and thus make known to them Jehovah's truth by his life, as well as by words. These feelings on Hezekiah's part seem to be recognized in

Isaiah's subsequent promise that he should recover : for the promise is from 'Jehovah, the God of David his father,' and involves an assurance, not only of his own escape from death, but also that the city as well as himself should be delivered out of the hand of the King of Assyria ; and thus reminds him that his life is prolonged, not for his individual merits, nor for his individual advantage, but because of God's covenant with the house of David, and that he may fulfil the duties to which that house has been called. If a man has a real work to do in the world, he must lament if it is not permitted him to accomplish it : he will lament even though he acquiesces in the absolute will of God, and believes that God will accomplish his own good design, even more perfectly, through this apparent frustration of it by the power of nature and circumstances. Moreover, before the death and resurrection of Christ there was also a far greater—nay almost entire—obscurity and gloom over the future, even to those who had most habitual faith in God. It is difficult—perhaps, except for a moment, impossible—for us now to realize all they then felt ; for in our times a man has, with few exceptions, either become too occupied with the duties or the pleasures of this world to have very deep thoughts on death, or the discovery of their depth and darkness has driven him to find light and life in the clear hope of the resurrection which the Gospel has made known to us : but we can see from the language of Hezekiah, and from the like expressions in some of the Psalms, that the holiest men of old could not but look on death as a descent into hell ; and therefore, though they believed that God was there also, they shrunk instinctively from it, and desired rather to serve him in the land of the living. We may contrast Hezekiah's language on this occasion with that of St. Paul in his Epistles to the Philippians, and to Timothy.

The corresponding narrative in the Second Book of Kings relates the going back of the shadow on the degrees or steps of Ahaz as a miracle ; but the account before us falls within the ordinary laws of Providence and nature. And I think that on comparing the two documents (that in the Chronicles is so brief as to throw no farther light

on the question) by the ordinary methods of historical criticism, we may see that though both the writers believed in the possibility of miracles, which in their minds were not separated by any marked division from what we now call providential events, yet the contemporary historian does not describe the occurrence in terms that exclude any explanation but that of miracle, because he described simply and honestly what he or his informant saw, and which in fact was not a miracle: whereas the other, living 200 years or more after the event, introduces the miraculous element into the account by a few transpositions and variations which to him—to whom the miracle is the most obvious, nay the only conceivable, means of understanding the original documents—seem a mere matter of literary compilation and explanation. He is just as simple and honest here as when he is abstracting the most ordinary fact from the mass of chronicles before him; and as unconscious of the change he has wrought as are the various commentators who, down to the present day, take for granted that the statements in the Book of Kings are a mere supplement to those in Isaiah, without any difference in kind. If we prefer to believe that verses 21 and 22 of the chapter (xxxviii.) before us are a part of the original document added by the author at the end, when he saw that he had omitted, in the proper part of the narrative, the facts they mention, the whole occurrence will appear to have been this:—that Hezekiah being dangerously ill, Isaiah, under an impulse which he, like Socrates, recognized to be from God, but which directed the Hebrew prophet what to do, while it only admonished the Greek philosopher what to abstain from, went to warn the king that he must prepare for inevitable death; and then left him in great trouble at the declaration, and in earnest prayer that his life might be spared. In this grief and prayer Isaiah both as a patriot and as a personal friend fully sympathized: and being soon convinced that Jéhovah had heard their prayers, and that he was empowered to promise Hezekiah recovery instead of death, he returned to announce this new ‘word of Jéhovah;’ and to prescribe the medical means which were to be employed

in faith of the result. Hezekiah's grief, as we see in the accompanying record of it, had expressed itself in lamentations that he was cut off from 'seeing Jehovah,' that is, worshipping him in his temple at Jerusalem; and Isaiah's promise was couched in the form of an assurance that he should go up to the temple again in two or three days, as we should say.* Hezekiah asked for 'a sign' that the promise would be fulfilled; and then Isaiah referred to a phenomenon which occurred at the time, but which we know, though they could not, to have involved no suspension of the laws of nature.† Dr. Alexander's literal translation of the text (which I give, because he is entirely in favour of the miraculous explanation) removes all the difficulty which appears from the use of the future verbs in our Authorized Version. He reads:—'And this to thee the sign from Jehovah, that Jehovah will perform this word which he hath spoken: Behold I (am) causing the shadow to go back, the degrees which it has gone down (*or* which have gone down) on the degrees of Ahaz, with the sun ten degrees backward; and the sun returned ten degrees, on the degrees which it had gone down:—and not only is the statement of the Book of Kings, that the terms of the sign were deliberately chosen by Hezekiah, wholly wanting here, but neither is there anything that requires us to suppose that the sign occurred at the very moment in which Isaiah first directed the remedy of the figs, and promised the king's recovery. The analogy of Isaiah's method of employing and appealing to 'signs' on all other occasions, rather favours the conclusion that neither he nor Hezekiah would have been in such haste; and that they would have thought the phenomenon of the shadow equally a sign and pledge that the promise should hold good, though it did not occur till Hezekiah was already in the way of recovery.

If, on the other hand, we think with some commentators that verses 21 and 22 are a later addition, we may suppose that Isaiah witnessed the going back of the shadow on the

* Compare Hosea, vi. 2.

† Vitringa and Gesenius refer to instances of like effects, in modern times, of a refraction caused by some vapour or cloud.

steps of Ahaz, as he went through 'the middle court,' and that he saw in it the sign that their prayers were heard, and thereupon returned to Hezekiah. Whether those verses are a part of the original text or not, it may be possible for Hebrew scholars to decide, when they can divest their minds of certain prejudices which are hitherto so strongly shown in their conclusions on either side. There still remains the prediction, that Hezekiah should live fifteen years; and which, it is said, compels us still to choose between a miracle and a narrative after the event. I think not: I believe all histories contain coincidences as important and striking, which we never suppose to be miraculous: and it may also be doubted whether 'fifteen' is not a round and definite, put for an indefinite, number; and whether the compilers of the habitually imperfect, and often inaccurate, Hebrew chronologies, may not have calculated the length of Hezekiah's reign from this very statement, assumed to have been literally fulfilled. But even if a slight change in, or addition to, the text, be here the alternative to a miracle, I see less difficulty in the former than in the latter; though I cannot give all the arguments, without writing a complete essay on the miracles of the Old Testament,—which, indeed, is a work much wanted.*

Let me, however, notice one probable objection: namely, that in thus unscrupulously applying the ordinary methods of criticism to the scriptural documents before us, we are forgetful of the reverence due to the Bible as God's revelation. It is not reasonable to reply to such objections, that truth is truth, and that an honest inquirer will disregard the consequences to which the pursuit of truth leads him. He is not a rational, if he is an honest, inquirer after truth, who fancies it is to be attained without that careful verification of his first notions, which can only be effected by bringing these to the test of all facts which properly bear on the subject; and the man who by independent observations and experiences has ascertained the fact that the Bible is the Book of Life and Light, and has a real unity in itself, is not only not unphiloso-

* See my *Miracles and Science*, published in 1854.

phical if he insists on employing this fact to verify a critical conclusion as to such a point as we here speak of, but he would be unphilosophical if he were to take any other course. But I appeal confidently to the result, if he, being a reflecting as well as a religious man, does apply this very test. Just as the critical investigation of the works of Herodotus, or Livy, has heightened the respect of real scholars for authors whom the half-informed alone think objects of patronizing self-conceit ; so a man's reverence for the Bible is helped, and not hindered, when he frankly and clearly recognizes the fact that its documents are not objects of superstitious idolatry, but of manly investigation, and thereby of a respect and reverence such as can never be felt for an idol, by whatever name we may adjure its worshippers. And, as it is often instructive to see ourselves reflected back in those most opposite to us, let us consider that there is a school of thinkers, at the head of whom were Hume and Gibbon in the last age, and who have not less able and learned representatives in our own, who quite accept the dogma that the Bible is *not* to be treated like other books ; and that neither for them, nor for those whom their opinions in any way influence, is the result reverential for the Bible. And, lastly, I ask the reader who has accompanied me thus far, in my deliberate and avowed plan of treating this book of Isaiah like any other book, what he actually finds to be the result ? Does he feel less reverence for it, or for the Book of which it is a part ? Does he find that he holds the old Christian faith of his fathers, that this Book is indeed the Word of God, less heartily than he did before ?

The questions, of some archæological interest, whether the 'degrees of Ahaz' were a sun-dial introduced by that king with other Assyrian fashions ; or only a flight of steps on which a column or other body cast a shadow ; or whether it was the latter, expressly devised for a sun-dial ;* have been discussed with much learning : but as no one conclusion can be positively preferred, the reader will find it best to examine them at length for himself.

* 'The obelisk of Augustus on the Field of Mars at Rome was of this kind, which served as a sun-dial.'—Delitzsch's *Commentary*, English Translation.

It may be worth while to observe, that, in any case, there is no reason for assuming (as some critics do) that the degrees marked such large divisions of time as would require a refraction of the sun's rays far beyond any that has been witnessed on any other occasion on record.

'The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he was sick, and recovered from his sickness,' is a description (as this title seems exactly to express) of his feelings and thoughts, during the very progress of his illness and cure; verses 10 to 14 describing the former, and verses 15 to 20 the latter. Mortal disease threatened to cut off his days, when their natural course was only at the middle; he found himself suddenly deprived, as by a sentence of punishment, of the rest of his years;* summoned to leave for ever the bright world of life,—which was so pleasant with its human fellowships, and with the presence of Jehovah in nature, in providence, in the nation, in the temple-services, and in his own heart,—and to enter the dark gates of the grave, alone, and without the sustaining thought that the LORD had passed them before him.† Like a shepherd's tent, which never remains long in one place, but has its pins hastily pulled up and its covering taken away (the words, says Dathe, implying violent and hasty removal), and leaves the lately busy encampment a silent desert again;—so, says Hezekiah, my generation, the generation of those inhabitants of the world whom I shall behold no more, is departed, or plucked up from me.‡ There seems to be no necessity for departing from the more usual meaning of the Hebrew word, which is certainly 'generation,' and rendering it by 'dwelling,'

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'Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Che la diritta via era smarrita.
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,
Che nel pensier rinnuova la paura!
Tanto è amara, che poco è più morte.'

Dante, *Inferno*, I. i.

† 'Grant, O Lord . . . that through the grave and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for His merits who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.'—*Collect for Easter Even*.

‡ Longfellow has the same image to describe the cares of life, which—
'Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.'

taken to mean 'body : ' for the substitution of the image of his generation leaving him, for the thought of his leaving them, is at least as agreeable to the genius of Hebrew poetry as it evidently would be to that of our own. The tent suggests the weaver's web, and the speaker first becomes himself the weaver, rolling up the web of his life ; and then the action is transferred to Jehovah, who is represented as about to cut the web off from the loom, or, more exactly, the thrum—or threads which join the web to the loom. Perhaps continuing the image of the weaver, he says that during the day he expected that with the arrival of night God would make an end of his life : during the night the fever raged in his bones as though a lion were gnawing at them, and he reckoned it impossible for him to survive beyond the morning ; but then again followed the day, with its dull monotonous suffering, so well expressed by the repetition of the words in which it was first described,—'from day even to night thou wilt make an end of me.' Sometimes his pains made him cry out aloud : at other times, his strength was so low that he could only 'inwardly groan and bemoan himself' (as the elder Lowth explains it). And then, changing the metaphor to that of a man pressed by an unmerciful creditor,* he exclaims, 'O Jehovah, I am oppressed ; undertake for me.'

In contrast with the 'I said,' of verses 10 and 11 stands the 'What shall I say?' with which the psalm passes from the description of his sickness to that of his returning health. The suddenness of his delivery surprises him, so that he wants words to express his thankfulness, and can only say that Jehovah hath both spoken to him, and himself done what he promised. His soul has passed through great bitterness, and he shall remember it, and his deliverance from it, with awe, all the days of his life ;—or else, he will go up with reverent joy and thankfulness to the temple ever after ; the word being the same as in Psalm xlii. 4. In this time of danger in which God alone could have saved him, he has learnt to understand that

* 'As that fell sergeant, Death,
Is strict in his arrest.'

men do not live by mere course of nature but by 'these things'—by the word and power of God; and to this divine care he recognizes that his own life is now due. His great and bitter suffering of spirit as well as body is turned into peace; he realizes that his sins, of which he had been brought into such fearful consciousness by the approach of death, and of which he felt, as men ever have felt, that death is the consequence and punishment, are forgiven him; and that Jehovah has delivered him with the arms of love from the pit of destruction:—'Thou hast loved my soul from the pit of destruction,' as the Hebrew beautifully expresses it. Then with a renewed expression of that strong feeling of the evil of death, and the blessing of life, and with an allusion to his hope of children now that his life is spared—both which we have already noticed—he rises more and more into the language of joy and triumph. 'Jehovah to save me!' seems to be in the form of a battle-shout; and the 'songs for stringed instruments,' to be sung in perpetual service in the House of Jehovah, may be best illustrated by those psalms which are evidently processional and choral, and in some instances, as Psalms cxvi. and cxviii., public thanksgivings after sickness, on occasions like the present. We might, perhaps, attribute Psalm cxviii., in particular, to Hezekiah himself, and in reference to this sickness.

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CHAPTER XXII.

ISAIAH XXXIX.—THE EMBASSY FROM BABYLON.—CHRONICLE OF EUSEBIUS, AND BEROSUS.—SENNACHERIB'S ANNALS.—BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES.—VALUE OF THE LATTER.—THE SIN OF HEZEKIAH.—TRUSTING GOD IN POLITICS.—MODERN HISTORY.—NIEBUHR AND NAPLES.—COLLETTA.—REVERENCE FOR GREAT MEN.—NATIONS AND RULERS RE-ACT ON EACH OTHER.—HEZEKIAH'S RECEPTION OF THE EMBASSY.—ISAIAH'S DENUNCIATION.—'APRÈS MOI LE DÉLUGE.'—PROSPERITY OF ENGLAND.—RELIGIOUS TEMPER OF OUR STATESMEN.—MR. GLADSTONE.

I HAVE already given the substance of the notices of Merodach-Baladan and his times which, having been quoted from Berossus by Alexander Polyhistor, came to light a few years ago in the Armenian version of Eusebius's Chronicle; and also that of the Assyrian Annals themselves, in as far as they are yet deciphered. The former account stands thus:—'After the reign of Sennacherib's brother, Hagisa (or Acises) had possession of the Babylonian government, but was killed by Merodach-Baladan before thirty days had elapsed: and he too, after a reign of six months, was killed, and succeeded by a man named Elibus, in the third year of whose reign Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, marched an army against the Babylonians, defeated them in a pitched battle, sent Elibus and his friends prisoners to Assyria, and made his own son Asordan king of Babylon.'* The other account is, that Sennacherib, in the first year of his reign, fought and defeated Merodach-Baladan, whom he seems to have found in independent possession of Baby-

* *Berosi Fragmenta*, in the Appendix to the 3rd volume of Bunsen's *Aegyptens Stelle*: and in Schrader's *Keilinschriften*, u. d. A. T. p. 216. This is the Armenian version of Eusebius's account of what Polyhistor relates of the Babylonian history which Berossus wrote from the original records. For proposed reconciliations of Ptolemy's Canon with Berossus, and of both with the Cuneiform Inscriptions, see Dr. Hincks in the *Irish Transactions*, xxii. 4, 364, ff., and Dr. Schrader, *u. s.*

lonia, but who now fled, leaving his country to be subjugated, and put under an Assyrian vice-king ‘a man of the name of Bil-ibus, the son of one of Sennacherib’s confidential officers, who had been bred up in his palace:’ and in the fourth year of Sennacherib’s annals—that is, in the year after his campaign in Judea—he relates an expedition against the Chaldeans, and says, ‘Merodach-Baladan, whom I had defeated in the course of my first year, was afraid at the coming of my armies, he took his gods in their shrines, and fled with them, like a bird, into the country of Nagiti-Rakki, which was beyond the sea. His brothers, the offspring of his father’s house, whom he had left on this side the sea, together with the men of the country, I brought out from the land of Beth Yakin in the marshes [of the Euphrates], and made them slaves: I destroyed and burned his cities. On my return I appointed my first-born son Assur Nadin to the government of the country, and gave him the land of Accad and Sumir.’ The list of Babylonian kings in Ptolemy’s canon does but add a third set of discordant notices. The ‘son of Sennacherib’s confidential officer, bred up in his palace,’* may have been his foster-brother, and the same person whom Berosus calls ‘his brother:’ but I do not pretend to reconcile the accounts. They will not, however, appear more different from each other than we might expect, if we remember that the deciphering of one is as yet more or less tentative and that we have another at fourth or fifth hand, and with strong evidence of extreme carelessness in the compiler, Eusebius, himself.

Babylonia, therefore, was at this period alternately a province of Assyria of such importance that royal princes of the imperial dynasty were appointed its viceroys; and independent of, and in arms against, that power. And the latter was now the case. Merodach-Baladan may have seized the moment of Sennacherib’s discomfiture in Judea to raise his standard again; or at least have seen in that discomfiture an opening for an alliance with the first king

* This is Sir Henry Rawlinson’s translation: Dr. Schrader gives—‘den Sohn eines Weisheitskundigen in der Nähe der Stadt Suanna, welchen man in Gemeinschaft der kleinen Knaben in meinem Palaste erzogen hatte.’

whom, as far as we know, Sennacherib had not succeeded in finally reducing to submission.* We can hardly doubt that the embassy, whether sent immediately before or after the revolt, was political; and that the congratulations on Hezekiah's recovery, and the inquiry—though of interest to the Babylonian astronomers—as to the going back of the shadow, were subordinate objects to that of forming an alliance between Babylon and Judah. This, indeed, may be the meaning intended by the mention of the 'letters and present,' which were sent to Hezekiah by Merodach-Baladan; but even if there were no such specific advances on his part, the spirit of the whole transaction is not the less clear. There is an apparent difficulty in reconciling this account of the riches of Hezekiah—'which his fathers had laid up in store until that day'—with the statement in the Book of Kings and in the Assyrian Inscription, of the enormous tribute levied upon him by Sennacherib, and to which Isaiah seems to allude in chapter xxxiii. 2, 7, 8, 18. But the actual silver and gold taken from the treasury and stripped from the temple-doors and pillars would have been but a small part of the wealth contained in the uncaptured city of Jerusalem; something even of the tribute may have been got back if 'the booty of a great spoil was divided,† when Sennacherib's army was discomfited; and we know how rapidly a nation may recover its material losses, and exhibit renewed prosperity after a war. On this and on other points, the narrative before us may be advantageously compared with the parallel account in the Book of Chronicles.

The author of the Chronicles gives predominance to the ecclesiastical, as the author of the Book of Kings does to the civil, side of their national history: he is extravagantly censured and depreciated by some modern

* Those who adopt the chronology of the Assyrian Canon and at the same time retain the date of the 14th of Hezekiah for this embassy, of course place it before Sennacherib's invasion of Judea. I have already expressed my doubt as to that chronology having been established. We owe much to the Assyriologists: but they are obliged to deal so largely in conjecture that it is best in many cases to take their translations, but for the present to suspend our judgment as to their historical reconstructions.

† Chapter xxxiii. 23.

critics, not only for want of precision, but for prejudice and partiality—as in omitting such unfavourable facts as the idolatries of Solomon; but even if it be not enough to say in reply, that he refers his readers to then existing records for ‘all the rest’ of the events which he thus warns them he does not give, and if we must admit him to have had the commonest failing of all historians, we shall lose not only many important facts but also much indispensable light upon those of the other historical books if we reject his help. Events which the original chroniclers would have narrated without explanation, because they were sufficiently intelligible of themselves to contemporaries, he amplifies with explanations of their causes; and he thus illustrates things which a different state of mental development, as well as of outward circumstances, had made obscure to his own readers, and would, but for his aid, be obscure to us who, if we have more pretensions to philology and philosophy than he, have no longer all his sources of information. And he here throws light on the brief statements of Isaiah and the Book of Kings, by his account of the great prosperity of Judah after the overthrow of Sennacherib, and the way in which the friendship of her king was consequently courted by the neighbouring states; by his pointing out that in the king’s manner of receiving those overtures he represented the general feeling of his people, so that his act was properly national and productive of national consequences; and by his calling our attention to the pregnant truth that this act was but a first manifestation of what was already their settled state of mind and heart, and would therefore assuredly exhibit itself, not merely in this isolated expression, but in the whole subsequent career of the nation, until the state of mind itself was changed. And he explains what this state of mind was, in the words—‘Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem: notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of Jehovah came not upon

them in the days of Hezekiah.' Here was the old, deep-seated, vice re-appearing in a form adapted to the new circumstances of the time. The Hebrew nation—and indeed every other, now not less than then—could only stand by faith in its unseen yet ever-present King, and conscientious obedience to his laws: they had quite forgotten this, not for the first time, during the prosperous reign of Uzziah, and had ceased to trust in anything but their own power and wealth, and the settledness of their institutions: when these failed them during the long years of Assyrian supremacy and invasion, they tried with no better success their systems of political alliances, intrigues and counterpoises, in which Hebrew craft was to outwit barbarian force: and now when it might have been hoped that all this severe discipline had taught them how vain was their trust in either the one or the other, it needed but an opportunity—'God's leaving them to try them'—to prove that both king and people were ready to fall back on the old courses, so superficially had the lesson been learnt, and so immediately forgotten. Instead of keeping steadily in view the fact that their deliverance from Assyria was wrought by God, after all their own schemes had completely failed, and adhering to the simple, straightforward conduct which that fact pointed to, they were taking credit to themselves for the deliverance, and proposing, or accepting the proposal of, a new system of heathen alliances. In these, Judah was probably to be the patroness, and not the patronized: and the foreign policy which had been so ruinous in the hands of Ahaz, Shebna, and the kings of Samaria, was to be made successful by a combination with that of the powerful Uzziah, and such as he might have adopted had he not lived before the rise of the late Assyrian domination.* The fear which characterized the previous policy was now somewhat modified with pride but the spirit was the same: for it was the spirit which

* Dr. Schrader indeed (*Keilinschriften, u. d. A. T.* p. 115) thinks he finds some trace of such an alliance in an inscription of Tiglath Pileser, in which this king says he reduced nineteen districts and cities of Hamath which had rebelled against Assyria, and gone over to Az-ri-ya-a-hu mat Ja-hu-di—which certainly seems to be Azariah (or Uzziah) of Judah.

has no faith that when a man or a nation keeps the plain road of duty and honesty the consequences may be expected without anxiety ; and which, therefore, substitutes for such adherence to duty some of those schemes by which mere worldly, godless, politicians are still, as in old times, ever striving to compass their ends, whether the subversion, or the restoration, of a dynasty or a party, or the acquisition, or the preventing of others from acquiring, a territory or an office ; but which at last brings them to the inevitable condition which Shakspeare describes as their fate, in words so significant as to be worth quoting a second time :—‘ A politician, a man that would circumvent God, o’er-officed by an ass.’

The spirit of such policy is worldly and godless ; but if we will study it, and what the Bible reveals concerning it, for our own profit, we must look how it works still, as of old, in the religious and patriotic, and not in the merely selfish :—in the Hezekiahs rather than in the Shebnas. And though the quiet, legal, course of modern politics does not supply the most obvious illustrations of the eternal laws which govern it, yet these are as really at work with us as with other nations—only a little closer observation is necessary. A greater difficulty lies in the fire which still smoulders under the dead-looking ashes, on which he must tread who meddles with contemporary history : and, therefore, it is with hesitation that I suggest, that we may find a counterpart of Hezekiah’s want of faith in the future guidance of the God who had led him through the past, in the repressive policy which our statesmen adopted, and so many of our patriots approved, after the peace of 1815. A large part of the best men of that day seem to have lost all clear belief that the God who had just delivered Europe from a mightier incarnation of sheer, arbitrary, force than Sennacherib’s had any farther work for his Englishmen,* and that he only required them still to

* ‘ Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they duly and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of reformation itself. What does he then, but reveal himself to his servants, and, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen ?—I say, as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy.’—Milton’s *Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*.

mark and follow the method of his counsels. They retained their faith in the ideal beauty of freedom and progress,—just as Hezekiah no doubt retained his faith: but, in a temper essentially analogous, though different in form, to that which prompted the alliance of Judah with Merodach-Baladan they renounced, for all practical purposes, both their youthful love of freedom and their maturer reverence for constitutional rights: and they avowed that, while their hopes for the future were utterly dim, their present trust was in the vulgarest expedients of police-craft; and in resistance to the reforms which in the abstract they admitted to be desirable, but in the demand for which they would see nothing but man's sedition instead of the signs by which God was pointing to the forward road.

Though I share the ordinary belief of my countrymen, as to the causes of the late European revolutions,* and also as to the conduct of the several kings and governments since the recovery of their power, I think it so impossible to speak of the internal politics of a foreign nation without misapprehensions and blunders, that I refrain from making the obvious applications which would otherwise be here at hand: yet, as I have illustrated a former part of my text at so great length from Niebuhr's pictures of his own, and his countrymen's, condition and temper during the War of Freedom, I must point to the last—only too faithful—resemblance between the two stories. Already, in 1815, Niebuhr had begun to lament that 'the first war did them no harm, but that was conducted in a different spirit from the present one:' and in 1819, after the description already quoted, of what might have been, when 'the ground was cleared,' &c., he says,—'No seed was sown, and so of course weeds shot up in rank luxuriance: nothing can exonerate those who neglected their duty at that time, from the blame of these results: . . . the tone of public feeling has degenerated, and God knows how it is to be raised.' And, sadder still, we find the religious and philosophic statesman himself fallen under the same unbelief in God's methods. He still loved law and liberty as they appeared in past history, or as he

* Written in 1852.

conceived of their restoration out of mediæval institutions : but the actual process by which alone God will have law, and liberty, and the various forms of human progress, developed, was too rough, and too soiled with hard and unskilful struggles, to be tolerable to him : he not only disliked it, as he did the organization of armies and police for the ends of despotism, but he was glad to employ these to put it down. Few things are more painful, few more instructive, to him who has studied the laws of political society by help of this great man's works, than that story of the course Niebuhr took when the Austrian army was at Rome, on its way to Naples. He might urge that the Neapolitans had not developed a constitution out of their old municipalities, which were most probably too effete for any such purpose ; that, with that fatal habit of Italy, whether conqueress or conquered, they had gone for their new polity to Spain, which, indeed, had given them the one good ruler whom they had known for centuries ; and that though their parliament did represent the majority, at at least, of the possessors of property and intelligence throughout the country, it worked but indifferently : but a Frenchman in Napoleon's time would have produced as plausible arguments for controlling Prussia by external interference, as could be adduced for meddling now with Naples. Yet Niebuhr, who, some five or six years before, could feel and write as we have seen, when the question was between France and Prussia, was now so eager to tread out the first poor spark of Italian liberty, that when the Austrian army was detained for want of funds, he (being Prussian Minister at Rome), without waiting for the directions of his government, pledged its credit with the Roman bankers, and so enabled the invading army to march on Naples without a moment's delay.* 'There and thus,' as the Neapolitan historian Colletta says, 'was a great deed of that policy of power which modern kings

* There is apparently an expression of surprise, as well as of disapproval, at the natural consequences of the foreign interposition which Niebuhr had thus aided, in the following extract from a letter of his to M. de Bunsen, dated from Naples two years after that event :—'It appears that new proscriptions are beginning, and that *letters d'exil* have come from Vienna. An officer has been ordered to leave the country, without even having been brought to any trial.'—Niebuhr's *Life and Letters*, vol. iii. p. 55.

and governments trust in, consummated against a people too feeble and too little wise to resist.' He adds, 'that this, as every other like event, bears witness of the truth, which he will lose no opportunity of proclaiming, that neither revolutions nor despotisms will in the end avail anything; but that the social culture and elevation of the whole people is the only effective instrument of worthy and durable political reforms, the only real governing power, and that to it must the nations direct their hopes and their acts.' And when I read these words of the man who was carried prisoner to Austria, and died in exile, for the part he had taken in the constitutional government of his own country; when I consider that, whatever the defect, or positive evil, of some other elements of that government, it also contained, in the germ at least, these doctrines of Colletta, and that the wisdom and influence of himself, and of those who thought and acted with him, were there, to develop these germs, if time and opportunity had been allowed; when I remember that, bad or good, it was the government of the nation's own choice; when I look at these things, and then think that it was Niebuhr who urged and aided the Austrian troopers in crushing Naples under their hoofs, and so leaving it at the mercy of a power worse than that from which his own

In M. de Bunsen's defence of the political opinions and character of Niebuhr, which is prefixed to this volume, and in reference to the point which I have here noticed, he says—after stating the fact of Niebuhr's anticipation of his government's instructions to assist the Austrians—that their army, 'in spite of the rapidity of its movements, could never get in sight of an enemy, not even in the impregnable pass of Androdoco.' But high as this statesman's authority is in any matter of history ancient or modern, it is not higher, on a point of contemporary Neapolitan history, than that of Colletta; and Colletta states, in substance, that the Neapolitan army and general, carried away by the undisciplined enthusiasm of raw levies, not only attacked the Austrians, instead of remaining on the defensive as prudence dictated, but attacked without ordinary caution. They advanced from the heights of Androdoco in two columns, and attempted to take Rieti, where the Austrians were posted, with the first of these columns, before the other could arrive to its support. They were met by no such ill-directed measures; and the Neapolitan army of 'civilians, unacquainted with war,' was soon thrown into confusion: a charge of Hungarian cavalry completely broke them; and with a panic as universal as their previous courage, they fled and utterly dispersed: so that the Austrians, who advanced cautiously on the third day after, found the heights of Androdoco, and the whole frontier, open to them, and without farther resistance reached Naples, and restored the absolute power of Ferdinand I.—*Storia del Reame di Napoli*, ix. 10, 32.

country had been delivered ; I cannot but conclude, in the words of the Bible, ' He rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.'

Nations and their rulers act and re-act upon each other. Hezekiah sank under the influence of the general demoralization, and really shared in it ; and then, by expressing it thus publicly in act, he confirmed it in the people. If he could have risen entirely above that influence, he would have done much more towards delivering the nation from it ; but we must not forget how very much he actually did, even though we suspect from his conduct on the present occasion, that he may not have been always so opposed to the policy of Shebna as Isaiah was.

Hezekiah's reception of the illustrious strangers has been compared with that of Solon by Cræsus,—*τὸν Σόλωνα θεράποντες περιῆγον κατὰ τοὺς θησαυροὺς καὶ ἐπιδείκνυσαν πάντα ἑόντα μεγάλα τε καὶ ὄλβια*.—' He was glad of them,' and showed them his arsenals, palaces, treasures, and curious and rare things, among which last may have been included 'the spices and the precious ointment : ' or else these may have been specimens of the valuable products of 'his dominion' or realm, as we know Jericho and Gilead were famous for their balsam, and that Hoshea sent oil, as a present or tribute, to Egypt. It can hardly be thought improbable that Isaiah was purposely left in ignorance of all these things ; and that the king's uneasy consciousness of what the prophet's judgment would be, is indicated in his reply that the ambassadors came from a far country, as though he would make his hospitality seem a duty ; and in the reluctance with which he confesses that country to be Babylon. Isaiah saw at once into the heart of the matter. It was not long before that he had spoken thus to Hezekiah :—' Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years : and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria : and I will defend this city : '—and in this reference to the covenant with David and his line, and to the city, or nation, of which he was the head in right of David, Hezekiah had seen a promise that the line should

not fail with himself. And now, this is Isaiah's message : — 'Hear the word of the LORD of hosts : Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon : nothing shall be left, saith Jehovah : and of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away ; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' Hezekiah's reply expressed neither the highest magnanimity nor the mere selfish egotism which some commentators have seen in it ; but a mixture of feelings in accordance with all that we know of his character. His appreciation of his position and duties as a king, is shown in his restoration of the national worship, and his final resistance to Sennacherib, as well as in his general and successful care for the prosperity of his country. But though a religious sense of duty, or the pressure of necessity, could occasionally stir him to master circumstances by a great effort, we may infer from the domination of Shebna, and from his own demeanour and language when supplicating Sennacherib's pardon, after the receipt of Rab-shakeh's message and Sennacherib's letter, in the time of his own sickness, and on the present occasion, that his natural and habitual disposition was rather to submit to the guidance of circumstances, with a gentle and pious confession that this weakness of his character was beyond cure, and to accept the consequences with pious and affectionate resignation to God's will, and thankful acknowledgment of any mitigation of them. He could enter into the meaning of the Psalmist's words, 'Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions : ' and though he had not, like Moses or Paul, the stern courage which could ask that the punishment might be to himself, and the forgiveness to his people ; but on the contrary was thankful to learn that there should 'be peace and truth in his days ; ' it must not be overlooked that it was peace and truth to his country as well as himself, and not merely selfish security, that he was thankful for. For this distinguishes his case, and the case of those who in times of personal or public calamity are so often found ready to feel

and act like him, from that expressed in the sentiment—devoid alike of religious thankfulness and patriotic sympathy—that ‘things will last my time.’ The sentiment is, indeed, in one respect the same in each case; it expresses the natural, and therefore as far as nature is concerned, the inevitable, selfishness consequent on the expectation of calamities beyond resistance; and the opportunity which the late European revolutions* have given us of studying it close at hand, though happily not in our own country, enables us not only to understand its character better but to think more charitably of those who succumb under it, than we otherwise could have done. But though nature is always alike under like circumstances, it may, or it may not, be raised above itself by a spirit and a power higher than its own. That power can inspire and transfigure without destroying nature, and reflect itself even in the infirmities and defects of nature: and then, instead of the worldly ‘Après moi le déluge,’ we have the pious ‘Good is the word of Jehovah; for there shall be peace and truth in my days.’ The corresponding Greek and Latin phrases—*ἐμοῦ θανόντος, γαῖα μυχθήτω πυρί*, and *mihi mortuo omnes mortui sunt*,—are quoted by Alexander from Calvin. Another phase of the temper they express, has been already considered, where we had it described by Isaiah as that of the worldly men of Jerusalem.

We too, like Hezekiah and his people, have ‘exceeding much riches and honour, cities and treasures, and storehouses; corn, and wine, and oil, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God has given us substance very much:’ and we too are exposed to the same temptations as they; and our nation, like theirs, may at any time fall under its power, and become obnoxious to its consequences and punishment. The warning example should never be absent from our thoughts; for there is no one, even the humblest of us, who is not taking a real part in the workings of our commonwealth, and influencing its destiny for good or evil; and that whether he will or not. There is much to fear for England; yet much to

* Written in 1852.

hope also from the increasing spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, in the fear of the LORD, which God is giving to our public men. The religious temper of so large a proportion of our statesmen, and their ever-rising moral standard of conduct in affairs, show so great a contrast with the low, vulgar, worldliness of more than one preceding generation, that it is already almost as if the sun were rising upon us through the thick darkness. And not the least promising among the signs of our happy times, is the personal character of him whom the many recognize now, as the few have long done, as marked out to be our First Minister within the next ten years :* who, while he possesses all the working powers of an English statesman, unites a more than ordinary readiness to look out for, and discern, the indications of God's plans and purposes, with a more than ordinary bravery in following these at the sacrifice of that temporary applause, at the cost of that temporary blame, which the unthinking and the prejudiced multitude for the time attach to what they call inconsistency, but which the wise hail as enlightened progress. It may be suspected, that many of the ecclesiastical, or even civil, opinions of this statesman, are not held by the author of these pages : but my aim has been, not to advocate opinions, but to elucidate a method, —the method, namely, which recognizes the government of a nation to be a problem too vast and complicated to be brought within the grasp of any one finite intellect ; yet a problem which is in itself rational, a deliberate design in God's counsels, and of which the statesman for the time being may always understand so much as the practical needs of the time require, and so much as will properly prepare the way for the next, as yet unindicated, step, provided that his judgment is enlivened by a God-fearing conscience, as well as enlightened by a cultivated intellect, and that he walks in the humility of wisdom, and not in the pride of self-sufficiency. The men who repealed the corn-laws could not foresee the revolutions of 1848, which we might not have escaped so easily if those laws had been then in existence : the men, who, during the previous

* Written in 1852.

ten or twelve years, have been laying deep and broad foundations for the moral and mental elevation of the working classes, could not foresee that the same revolutions, and the discovery of the gold regions with all its consequences, would open to those classes the road to so increasing a share of political power, as must end in the overthrow of our constitution, if they were to continue in their uneducated condition: but in the one case and the other there were sufficient indications to him who looked at the moral, as well as to the merely calculable, signs, and asked his conscience what was right, as well as his understanding what was wise. I will conclude this chapter with a passage from Mr. Gladstone, which, though little known, is worthy of Milton, or of Burke, for eloquence and constitutional philosophy, and not unconnected with the subjects we have been considering.

‘ Miserable indeed would be the prospect of the coming times, if we believed that authority and freedom were simply conflicting and contradictory elements in the constitution of a community, so that whatever is given to the one must be deducted from the other. But no Briton, who has devoted any portion of his thoughts to the history of his country, or the character of its inhabitants, can for a moment be ensnared into that, for him, false and degrading belief. It has been providentially allotted to this favoured isle that it should show to all the world, how freedom and authority, in their due and wise developments, not only may co-exist in the same body, but may, instead of impairing, sustain and strengthen one another. Among Britons, it is the extent and security of freedom which renders it safe to entrust large powers to Government, and it is the very largeness of those powers and the vigour of their exercise, which constitute, to each individual of the community, the great practical safeguard of his liberties in return. The free expression of opinion, as our experience has taught us, is the safety-valve of passion. That noise, when the steam escapes, alarms the timid; but it is the sign that we are safe. The concession of reasonable privilege anticipates the growth of furious appetite. Regularity, combination, and order, especially when joined

with publicity, have of themselves a marvellous virtue ; they tend to subordinate the individual to the mass, they enlarge by healthy exercise the better and nobler parts of our nature, and depress the poorer and meaner ; they make man more a creature of habits, and less of mere impulse ; they weaken the relative influence of the present, by strengthening his hold upon the future and the past, and their hold upon him. By gathering, too, into organised forms the various influences that bear sway in a mixed community, and leaving them to work within prescribed channels, those which are good acquire the multiplied strength of union, while the bad neutralise one another by reciprocal elimination. It is a great and noble secret, that of constitutional freedom, which has given to us the largest liberties, with the steadiest throne, and the most vigorous executive, in Christendom. I confess to my strong faith in the virtue of this principle. I have lived now for many years in the midst of the hottest and noisiest of its workshops, and have seen that amidst the clatter and the din a ceaseless labour is going on ; stubborn matter is reduced to obedience, and the brute powers of society, like the fire, air, water, and mineral of nature, are with clamour indeed, but also with might, educated and shaped into the most refined and regular forms of usefulness for man. I am deeply convinced, that among us all systems, whether religious or political, which rest on a principle of absolutism, must of necessity be, not indeed tyrannical, but feeble and ineffective systems ; and that methodically to enlist the members of a community, with due regard to their several capacities, in the performance of its public duties, is the way to make that community powerful and healthful, to give a firm seat to its rulers, and to engender a warm and intelligent devotion in those beneath their sway.*

* *Letter to the Right Rev. W. Skinner, D.D., on the Functions of Laymen in the Church*, pp. 15, 16.

The reader may compare Mr. Roebuck's description of the operation of the "immense safety-valve of parliamentary debate" in November, 1830 ; and his contrast between the French and English methods of enforcing opinions, in his *History of the Whig Ministry*, vol. i. pp. 345, 356.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ISAIAH XL.—LXVI.—QUESTION OF THE GENUINENESS OF THE LAST CHAPTERS OF ISAIAH.—ARGUMENTS ON EACH SIDE.—A THIRD HYPOTHESIS.—THE NAME OF CYRUS.—CORESH, AND THE LORD'S SERVANT.—MODERN EXPLANATIONS.—DOUBTS AND CERTAINITIES.—THE POSITIVE METHOD.—COHERENCE OF EARLIER AND LATER PROPHECIES.—THE EARLIER NOT FULFILLED AS ISAIAH HAD EXPECTED.—ENLARGEMENT OF HIS VIEWS.—FINITE AND INFINITE IDEALS.—FACTS FOR INDUCTION AS TO THE NATURE OF PROPHECY.

WE are now arrived at the question—itself a part, though the principal one, of a controversy of which I have already given the history—whether the last twenty-six chapters of the Book which bears the name of Isaiah, on a title-page which has come down to us as a part of the text itself, were really written by him, or by an otherwise unknown prophet living towards the end of the great Captivity. Each alternative is maintained, as clear beyond doubt, by the most recent commentators on both sides. But I cannot but think that a third view—that these chapters, though in the main by Isaiah himself, have come to us re-edited with interpolations and perhaps other changes dating from the Captivity—is more in accordance with the best methods of historical criticism than either, though hitherto but little regarded: and that until this has been argued out as completely as the others have been, a final decision is premature.

The first impression of every one who reads these chapters must be that he is carried by them into the time of the latter years of the Captivity rather than into that of Isaiah and Hezekiah. We seem to hear a prophet actually among the exiles by the waters of Babylon, comforting them, warning them, and promising them deliverance from Jehovah. It is the strength of this impression which has up to the present time sustained the old belief,

that these chapters are a series of miraculous predictions, with most of those commentators who still maintain that Isaiah was their author; while it leads those who cannot recognize such a power of miraculous prediction among the endowments of a prophet, to the conclusion that he who could so write was himself living in those times. The latter critics go on to argue that while the writer prophesies the restoration of the Jews as a future event, he seems, as of course, and in the manner not of a prophet, but of a contemporary, to recognize the captivity, and the events which we know from history to have then occurred, as the state of things in which he was actually living. Micah, in the days of Hezekiah, foretold that 'Zion should be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high place of the forest; that the daughter of Zion should go to Babylon, and that there Jehovah should redeem her from the hand of her enemies :'*—but let us fairly compare the tone of these words with the following : 'That saith to Jerusalem, thou shalt be inhabited, and to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers; that saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thy foundation shall be laid :'†—and by the side of both these passages let us put the opening words of Ezra's narrative : 'Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, Jehovah God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah : who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah God of Israel (he is the God), which is in Jerusalem :'‡—And then do we not see how different the tone

* Micah iii. 12; iv. 10. † Isaiah xlv. 26. ‡ Ezra i. 1, 2, 3.

of the first passage is from that of the second, and how like that of the second to the third? The name of Cyrus is repeated in the xlvth chapter of Isaiah: and in the lxivth we have the words, 'Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation, our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste;' while the rest of the chapter is an appeal to Jehovah to put an end to this miserable condition of his people, and is thus one of several instances in which that condition—the actual and now long existing captivity—is assumed in a way which unprejudiced criticism, it is urged, must admit to be historical, not prophetic.

I feel the force of this argument as often as I read these chapters: yet when I endeavour to distinguish between feeling and critical judgment, and to test the former by the latter, I am compelled to ask myself whether much of the feeling does not draw its life from an atmosphere of uncritical suppositions with which the question has been surrounded from time immemorial, and which, by habitual acceptance and inveterate use, have come to give an apparent historical reality to words and phrases which have not necessarily such significance, but are just as capable of other explanations. The suppositions—that the mention of Egypt and Ethiopia in chapter xliii. 3 refers to the invasion of those countries by Cambyzes, the son of Cyrus, and that of 'treasures of darkness' in chapter xlv. 3 to the conquest of Cræsus by Cyrus himself; that 'light and darkness' in chapter xlv. 7 allude to the dualism of the Persian theology; that the expression 'vessels of Jehovah'* in chapter lii. 11 has an historical connection with Ezra i. 7, 8; that the description of the gates of Babylon as of brass and with two leaves, and the naming Bel and Nebo as gods of Babylon, indicate some personal observation of these objects;—these, and such like suppositions, are very plausible, and give an impression of

* The word כְּלִים is 'a word of general import' (Gesenius) meaning any kind of implement or equipment; and Rosenmüller, and Cheyne (following Luzzatto) here prefer to translate 'armour.' I retain the rendering—'vessels'—of the Authorized Version, as the only generic word which is suitable English.

probability, yet, in truth, they are of no critical value, even if the writer were proved on other grounds to be a contemporary of Cyrus. The many ingenious and plausible interpretations of the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, as specific predictions of innumerable events in mediæval or modern history, show that there is hardly any limit to the power of the imagination to give a specific and local meaning and colour, and that with great appearance of reality, to almost any such language.

The value of arguments drawn from differences of ideas, sentiments, and style, and from the presence of certain words or idioms, has been considered in Chapter IX. As to the last point, I will now add that while Gesenius here gives a list of fifteen supposed modern words and usages, he throws great doubt on the possibility of distinguishing between fancy and fact in the matter, when he says that the Hebrew literature of the date of the exile is so free from any *strong* Chaldaic colouring, as to account for the reluctant admission of Eichorn and Bertholdt that they could find none in these latter chapters, and when he allows that the resemblances of style between these and the unquestioned works of Isaiah are such as he can best explain by supposing that the two were harmonized by an editor: that Knobel also gives a long list of modern words or usages which Delitzsch maintains to prove nothing; and that Mr. Cheyne, with the arguments of both these learned commentators before him, says—‘the argument from phraseology in Hebrew is merely a subsidiary one. The literature at our command is so narrow in compass, and has, in our opinion, been so often tampered with by unscrupulous editors, that any detailed description of the language must be attempted with the utmost caution.’*

As regards the argument from differences of ideas, sentiments and style,—while I recognize the differences (though not without seeing the resemblances too), I would here point out that a great part of these differences become important, or otherwise, according as we do or

* *The Book of Isaiah, chronologically arranged*, by T. K. Cheyne, M.A. Introduction, p. xix. I have already quoted this passage in Chapter IX., but now repeat it in order to complete my statement of the case.

do not admit the existence of certain connecting links between the earliest and latest prophecies. There are a large number of marked resemblances between chapters xiii. xiv. and the undisputed prophecies ; between chapters xiii. xiv. and chapters xxxiv. xxxv. ; and again between these last and the prophecies now before us : the latter (undisputed portion) of chapter xxi. is identical in ideas and style with the earlier part of the same chapter which speaks of Babylon in a way which is assumed to be only possible for a writer living in the Captivity : and in like manner chapters xxiv. to xxvii. are as nearly connected on the one side with the undisputed prophecies as they are on the other with these (chapters xl.—lxvi.), which are referred to the Captivity. And while there is no sufficient reason for separating chapters xiii. xiv. from the genuine prophecies, there is no reason at all, except the resemblance to the last part of the Book, for so separating chapters xxiv.—xxvii., and xxxiv. xxxv. We find intermediate forms, and connecting links : they are taken away ; and an argument is based on their absence.

This is true, not only of other minor arguments, but of that ‘argument from the omission of any reference to the Messianic King’ which Mr. Cheyne—agreeing in this with other learned critics—says ‘may perhaps be fairly regarded as absolutely decisive against the Isaianic theory.’* The idea of a reign of Jehovah and his righteous nation, ransomed and restored to its inheritance, but without any direct reference to a king of the house of David, is to be found in Isaiah’s earliest prophecies, such as chapters i. ii. and vi. : this idea is then expanded and embodied in several of his subsequent prophecies, in the expectation and promise of such an actual descendant and representative of David ; but in several other prophecies, and especially perhaps in chapters xxiv.—xxvii. and xxxiv. xxxv., the same idea re-appears in that first form, and this is afterwards more fully developed in the last portion of the Book. The difference between the earliest and latest prophecies does not amount to contradiction or incompatibility,

* *The Book of Isaiah*, Introduction, p. xxiii. ‘Historical tradition’ would be more accurate than ‘theory,’ in this place.

even when these are contrasted only with each other ; while it becomes comparatively unimportant if we recognize the existence of the intermediate links ; and not so to recognize them is, in fact, to exclude them because they are such links. But neither is there any sufficient proof (such as is supposed by the critics whose views I am now considering) that the captivity did produce any great change in the Messianic beliefs and expectations of the Jewish nation from those which they had held before. The historical evidence, such as it is, is rather the other way. The feeble colony which returned to rebuild Jerusalem by permission of Cyrus, returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel, the nearest surviving representative of the house of David, and he seems to embody the idea of the Messianic king to the contemporary prophets Haggai and Zechariah, in as far as that idea is present to them.* And though, in fact, the royal family of David never did permanently recover its old position in the state, yet the uniform language of the writers of the New Testament implies that the expectation of a personal Messiah of the house of David was not less strong then than it had been in the days of Hezekiah. If the Messianic ideas of the latter chapters of Isaiah are to be connected with some historical period, it must be that of times—Christian or Jewish—after the final destruction of the Jewish polity ; and the sense of this is shown in the interpretations given to them since then both by Christians and Jews. But it would be more correct to say that these ideas belong not to any one age, but are proper to the prophetic genius and inspiration in all times. How they can be supposed to have been discovered to Isaiah in a rational and intelligible manner, I shall endeavour to show hereafter.

I believe the matter-of-fact investigator will come to

* Haggai (ii. 21—23) tells Zerubbabel that when Jehovah shakes heaven and earth, and destroys the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen, he will take him—Zerubbabel—his servant whom he has chosen, and will make him as a signet. And Zechariah, though he gives Jesua the high priest a position of importance, and calls him 'the Branch' (iii. 8, vi. 12) ; yet he also recognizes Zerubbabel (iv. 1—14) as endowed by the sevenfold spirit of Jehovah, which Isaiah had declared to be the endowment of the rod of the stem of Jesse (xi. 1—3), and, apparently, as one of the two anointed ones (Jeshua being the other) who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

the conclusion, that the first argument—the argument from an apparently contemporary tone and atmosphere—is that in which the real strength of the case lies; and that the word ‘Cyrus’ is its main source and support, just as the word ‘Babylon’ was on another occasion. Whatever is the difficulty from the historical tone of those passages I have quoted or referred to, its chief vitality is in this name. The ingenious explanation of it as a title and not a proper name, proposed by Hensler and adopted by Hengstenberg, Hävernicks and Plumptre, has been given up by the latest writers on that side; for indeed, though ingenious it is not really tenable.* And they have returned to the older hypothesis of a miraculous prediction, both as to the name of the Persian king, and as to all the other descriptions or allusions which seem to refer specifically to the times of the Captivity. Between those who do, and those who do not, accept this last hypothesis there is no common ground of argument.

* This is, that the name of Cyrus, which the Greek historians derived from the Persian word for ‘Sun,’ was a Persian title, analogous to those of the Egyptian Pharaoh and Ptolemy, the Philistian Abimelech, the Amalekitish Agag, and the Roman Cæsar; and that it was known as such to Isaiah, either from Persian travellers or the Medes in Sennacherib’s army, so that he would have meant no more than Jeremiah expresses by ‘Jehovah hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes:’—that this explanation is confirmed by the statement of Herodotus and Strabo that Cyrus had another name before he ascended the throne; and by the fact that a much later Persian king, Bahram, was surnamed Kur:—and that it is possible that the royal author of the proclamation given by Ezra may have adopted the title the more readily from the mention of it in these prophecies of Isaiah, which, according to Josephus, were shown him by the Jews. This conjecture that Cyrus was a royal title, and not an individual name, is, moreover, supported by the evidence (quoted from Burnouf by Hävernicks) that some such title as Coresh, taken to mean the sun, was very widely extended among the Arian races, and adopted both by Persian and Indian dynasties: and Sir Henry Rawlinson’s opinion may be adduced on the same side; for while he doubts—and Lassen denies as beyond any doubt—the connection between Coresh, or Kurush, and Khūr (the Persian for ‘sun’), he ‘compares the former with the Sanskrit Kürūh or Kürūs, which was probably a popular title among the Arian race before the separation of the Median and Persian branches,’ and adds, that ‘the Kuru race of ancient India, descended from the famous Kürūh, the son of Samavarana, is too well known to require notice.’ And then this explanation is combined with the old view, by the argument, that if we have no right to suppose that Isaiah did or could blindly predict a mere unmeaning proper name of an individual two hundred years before his appearance, yet it is in accordance with the Christian idea of prophetic inspiration to believe that he could utter such a prediction of a name thus significant of the nation and the office of him who was to bear it.—Hengstenberg’s *Christology*, translated by Keith. Hävernicks, *Einleitung in d. A. T.* II. ii. 164, ff. Plumptre’s *Biblical Studies, Old Age of Isaiah*. *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, vol. xi. p. 112.

Those who supplement every defect of proof by an appeal to a miraculous authority which their opponents do not recognize, cannot expect an impartial hearing for such of their arguments as are critical: they will inevitably be thought unworthy of complete examination and reply; and this in fact has been the treatment which such arguments for the genuineness of these chapters have hitherto received. But let us grant that Isaiah had no such miraculous power; that he could not, and did not, predict either the name of Cyrus or any of the events of the Captivity which could only be known to contemporaries; and that any passages in these chapters which undoubtedly imply such contemporary knowledge must be referred to a contemporary, or still later, origin; and then we may ask whether the hypothesis that the old text of Isaiah was revised during the exile for practical use as a book of warning, consolation, and devotion by the Jews of that time, and perhaps again afterwards by merely literary editors who desired to give the text a decidedly orthodox character when the notion of miraculous prediction had taken the place of a truer and higher knowledge of what prophecy actually was—whether this hypothesis does not meet the difficulties of the case better than that of these chapters being the entirely new work of an otherwise unknown prophet. It respects that historical evidence which is as good as that which we have for the authorship of most ancient books: it appeals to internal evidence which has never been really explained, but still remains a stumbling-block on the contrary hypothesis; it restricts conjecture instead of giving it free scope; and if it requires a larger view of the genius of Isaiah and of the nature of Hebrew prophecy, this is no objection to it, so long as we remain within the bounds of reasonable probability and consistency. Our conception of Hebrew prophecy will, no doubt, be somewhat different according as we take these chapters to have been written in the days of Hezekiah or in those of the Exile: but it will be just as reasonable and intelligible a conception in the former case as in the latter. Though Hebrew prophecy, as I have already said, is a form of human life and thought which no longer survives in its

ancient shape, we can still understand the possibility of its existence, and recover something of its appearance : but if we are thus to re-construct that vanished form we must do so by an induction from all the facts known to us, and not by selecting some to the exclusion of others. Our idea of it would be other than it is, if none of the writings of Isaiah had come down to us ; and if these later chapters somewhat modify and enlarge our views as to its nature, if they are admitted to be by Isaiah, this is in itself no reason for doubting their genuineness.

The first reason for adhering as far as possible to the historical tradition as to the authorship of Isaiah is that it is the historical tradition. The rules of ordinary criticism require us to accept Isaiah as the author until it is shown that he cannot have been so: we are not to begin by treating the book as anonymous, and conjecturing who its author may have been. Then an examination of particulars shows that, whatever we must grant of certain passages, the general matter of the discourse may be understood as that of a prophet in Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah, and need not be taken to be by a Jew living in Babylon during the Exile. If we except those passages as interpolations, there is nothing unreasonable in taking these chapters as Isaiah's vision of that captivity which he had foretold to Hezekiah as about to come on his family and nation, and for the picturing of which the accounts of those who had already suffered the like captivity, after the invasions of Sargon and Sennacherib, would have supplied him with complete information. While the earlier prophecies were doubtless first spoken, and afterwards written down, there is every appearance that these latter chapters are an original literary composition ; and if we allow for the differences between oral and written discourse, and for the interval of time between the earliest and latest of such discourses, probably extending over fifty years, and for the originality of genius which does not servilely repeat itself, we may fairly say that these chapters are in the manner of Isaiah, whose habits of language as well as thought, may be recognized perpetually, with no greater differences than are found between the earlier and later works of Plato,

Dante, Shakspeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, or indeed any other author in whose case we have the materials for the comparison.* The apparent allusions to Isaiah's own times and circumstances are also many. Such are the comparison of Zion to a bride whose name shall be Hephzibah, which was the name of Hezekiah's wife, and the mother of his heir;† the words of comfort to the eunuchs,‡ compared with the prediction of the lot of the royal family;§ the argument from the ritual sacrifices, which has no meaning if addressed to those to whom it was no longer possible to perform the temple-service because there was no temple;|| and the description of Zion, whose watchmen are dumb and drunken, and her righteous men taken away by death, while she, the sorceress and harlot, sends her messengers and presents to the king afar off, and debases herself to hell:¶—words which make us think, on the one hand, of Isaiah's former denunciations of the national idolatries, the worldly princes and prophets, their persecutions, their 'covenants with death and hell,' the embassy to Egypt, and the alliance with Merodach-Baladan; and on the other, of the historian's description of the reign of Manasseh, when these national crimes were reproduced in their wonted forms, and would have been already foreseen by the prophet. The denunciations in the latter chapters of the selfish and idolatrous people, the anticipations of their punishment and reformation, the pictures of their restoration, and of Jerusalem as the centre to which all nations will turn, are the exact counterparts of those in Isaiah's earliest prophecies; and if there are some passages in which the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple are

* Professor Stanley Leathes (*Witness of the Old Testament to Christ*) gives a large number of phrases more or less common to the earlier and later chapters, and more or less peculiar to Isaiah. Among these are 'The Holy One of Israel,' which occurs twelve times in the earlier and thirteen times in the later chapters; and 'The Lord of Hosts,' which occurs six times in the later chapters. Professor Birks (*Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*) gives a further list of such phrases. These and the other proofs of the authorship of Isaiah are discussed with much learning and ability by Professor Delitzsch, in the Appendix to Drechsler's *Der Prophet Jesaja, uebersetzt und erklart*. Dr. Delitzsch refers to, but does not give at length these arguments, in his own Commentary, of which there is an English translation.

† lxii. 4.

‡ lvi. 3.

§ xxxix. 7.

|| xliii. 22—28.

¶ lvi. 9; lviii. 11.

described in words which seem historical rather than prophetic, there are others in which the future glorious position of the Holy City and House among the nations is foretold in language not less apparently that of a prophet who had imagined but never known these in ruins, and who forgets the one vision as the other rises before him.

There are passages in the prophecies of Zephaniah, and very numerous ones in those of Jeremiah,* which are so like portions of these later chapters, that they must have a common origin, while they appear in those writers in so fragmentary a form that it is difficult not to believe that they were the copyists, and that the other had preceded them in a composition as artistic as theirs is the contrary. The other alternative is possible, but I think an examination of the passages will show that it is the less probable in the present case. Again, we need an explanation of the anomaly that a genius not inferior to that of Isaiah should appear in a period when Hebrew literature had nearly arrived at its extinction, through a gradual decay, the stages of which are as easily traceable as in that of any other nation ; and that having appeared, his name and personality should have been lost, when those of Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah were preserved. And, lastly, it must be objected to the hypothesis of the non-genuineness of these chapters, that they leave Isaiah's character an inexplicable puzzle. Such a man as his unquestioned works show him to have been, would not have been content with the desponding though pious resignation of Hezekiah : nature would indeed have 'told her first lie in her noblest creature,' if Isaiah could thus terminate his fifty years' ministry.

Now, though objections of this sort are worth little against the genuineness of a text which has the fact of historical existence in its favour, they are not unimportant when they stand in the way of our accepting a conjectural emendation of that text. For the first essential of such an emendation is, that it shall be itself free from all internal difficulty, and so far thoroughly suitable for

* Zephaniah ii. 15 ; iii. 10. Jeremiah, *passim*.

taking the place of what is not capable of explanation, as it stands. And therefore, after applying these and the like tests, I am compelled to conclude that this theory of the non-genuineness of these chapters, and of their date being that of the Captivity, is far from being proved ; and that it is worth while to look farther into that third hypothesis which I have already stated, though it has hitherto found few, and those comparatively obscure, critics to support it.

This hypothesis requires some other explanation of the presence of the word or name Coresh,* than those already considered. And here it is important to notice that the story of Josephus that this prophecy was read by Cyrus, who was thereby induced to restore the Jewish nation, is not affirmed, but in fact contradicted, by the statement of Ezra—‘ that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia.’ The author of the Book of Ezra could have known no direct prophecy of Cyrus as the deliverer, either by Isaiah or any later prophet who could be quoted with authority, or he would have referred to him instead of Jeremiah. The fair inference is that no prediction—ancient or modern—which named Cyrus as the deliverer, was then known ; and that the story of Josephus is either his own invention, or derived by him from some comparatively recent tradition. Moreover, the resemblance, which is thought to be so striking between the description of Coresh in the words before us, and the historical accounts of the Persian king, is not the whole case. For plausible as it seems to understand one ‘ called, and named, by the God of Israel, though he has not known him,’ to be a heathen, though providential, instrument of Israel’s deliverance : yet these expressions, and still more their context, are so like, or even identical with, those of a number of other passages which it requires the utmost forcing to apply to Cyrus, that if the former are decided to indicate a contemporary Persian king—or indeed any other than a national Personage—the latter

* The same word as stands for Cyrus in the books of Ezra, Chronicles and Daniel, only that all these add ‘ king of Persia.’

become an inextricable puzzle : and the commentators are never able to agree whether they refer to Cyrus, to Israel, or to the Messiah. This will be shown more clearly by some instances :—

CORESH.

That saith to Coresh, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure : even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built, and to the temple, thou shalt be founded :

Thus saith Jehovah to his Anointed, to Coresh, whose right hand I have holden :

To tread down nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings :

I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight : I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places :

That thou mayest know that I, Jehovah which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel :

For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name ; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me :

I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways : he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor for reward.

ISRAEL ; JEHOVAH'S SERVANT.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. xl. 11. Thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob. . . . I will give thee for a covenant to the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages . . . their pastures shall be in all high places. xlix. 6—9: I have created him for my glory. Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. xlix. 3.

Behold my servant whom I uphold, I have put my spirit upon him. xlii. 1. The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me because Jehovah hath anointed me. lxi. 1. I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. xli. 10. I Jehovah have called thee . . . and will hold thine hand. xlii. 6.

I have made of thee a sharp threshing instrument. xli. 15. Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship. xlix. 7.

I will lead them in paths that they have not known : I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. xlii. 16. Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles. lxi. 6.

I have called thee by thy name I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy One of Israel. xliii. 1, 3.

Thou Israel art my servant thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof. xli. 9. Who is blind, but my servant, or deaf, as my messenger that I sent ? xlii. 19. I said, behold me, to a nation that was not called by my name. lxxv. 1. I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. xlii. 16.

That they might be called, Trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah they shall build the old wastes the former desolations the waste cities I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them Behold his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. lxi. 3, 4, 8 ; lxi. 11.

If the reader considers not only these instances, but the whole tone and spirit of their context ; and not least, the use of the phrase ' His Anointed,' which, with one very doubtful exception, is appropriated to the kings, prophets, priests, and patriarchs of the chosen nation of Israel ; I think he will agree with me, that such interchange and fusion of thoughts and images in describing Israel, the Messiah, and a heathen deliverer, are inexplicable in the mouth of a Jewish prophet of any age. No one could have attributed to a heathen king the character of the Messiah, and even of Jehovah himself.

The first suggestion that these difficulties, as well as the whole question of the authorship of Isaiah, must be met by setting aside the supposition that the king of Persia is indicated at all in this prophecy, is found, I believe, in the Academical Essay of J. U. Möller, a Danish theologian. He attempts, indeed, to maintain the verbal accuracy of the text by a new explanation of the word ' Coresh,' which Hebrew scholars are agreed in refusing to accept ; but his main argument that the name of the king of Persia here makes no real sense, seems to me to be sound.* The verbal difficulty is met by supposing a gloss or interpolation ; and this is the view of Schegg, who treats the word in chapter xlv. i. as a gloss ; and upon xlv. 28 says that the last verse of the chapter does not belong to the prophet himself, but is an explanatory addition of the Synagogue from the time of the Exile. He maintains that the verse does not properly suit the context, but is only a repetition of

* *De Authenticiâ Oraculorum Esaiæ. Havnæ, 1825.*—As Möller's Essay is very rare, and his method is ingenious and suggestive, though its specific conclusion is not accepted, the reader may like to see his argument stated. After urging the improbability that Isaiah should have exercised a power of prediction which Jesus himself never showed, and that the name of a Persian king, though not that of the Saviour of the world, should have been thus predicted ; and after showing the want of probability and coherence in the sense which it is now necessary to give to various passages in which Cyrus is supposed to be named or referred to ; he concludes that the word is no proper name at all, and that it is as much by accident that Isaiah here uses a word consisting of the same letters with which the Jews afterwards wrote the name of Cyrus, as it is that he calls the mother of Immanuel עלמה 'Alma,' in chap. vii. 14, where no one finds a prediction of the 'alma mater' of the Church of Rome. He then proceeds to inquire what is the meaning of the word, in the same way as scholars have to determine the meaning of so many other words, not only in Hebrew but in other languages, by reference to kindred roots, analogous forms, and by the sense of the context. This sense,

verse 26 specially applied by the interpolator to Cyrus. And as to the general probability of such an interpolation he observes that 'it is a mistake to suppose that the books of the Bible were like a metal casting poured out at once from the crucible and never altered: the Synagogue looked on them as its property, and never hesitated to finish them up, as an artist does his work: the opposite stiff notion of the integrity of the Canon involves us in endless critical difficulties as well as in false conceptions of inspiration.'*

I do not pretend to undo the work of 'the Synagogue,' nor to restore the original text of Isaiah; nor do I think any such reconstruction can be other than conjectural and uncertain. But the question whether our existing text is not a work of Isaiah, revised and re-edited during or after the Exile, and not a new work of that date, seems to me at least to claim a more complete discussion than it has yet received. 'If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties,' says Bacon. And

he says, requires the word to indicate the people of Israel: and he explains it—כִּרְשׁ—to be, by metathesis for כִּרְשֵׁר, the participle Benoni of the root כִּרְשׁ to be right, and so to mean, like the same participle of the cognate יָשָׁר upright or righteous. He thus brings the word into connection with יִשְׁרֹן (Jeshurun, as the diminutive of endearment for Jashur, the Upright) in verse 2 of the same xlvth chapter in which we have Coresh; and with the same word יָשָׁר ('make straight,' or 'direct,' in our Version), in verses 2 and 13 of the next chapter, as well as in xl. 3, 4. The metathesis he justifies by the constant usage of the Hebrew, and suggests that it may have been here adopted in order to avoid the inconvenience of one word ending, and the next beginning, with ר.

* *Der Prophet Isaiah, übersetzt und erklärt* von Peter Schegg, München, 1850. Haneberg inclines to taking the like view.—*Geschichte der biblischen Offenbarung*, p. 303. And a distinguished English Hebrew scholar, though quite decided against the Isaian authorship of these chapters, tells me that he is nevertheless disposed to think the name 'Cyrus' a gloss in xlv. 1, whatever may be the case in xlv. 28. He compares it with the name 'David,' in Psalm xviii. 50, which the learned and cautious Redding and Hupfeldt consider to be a gloss.

The observations of Dean Milman, while expressing his dissent from the learned German critics who attribute a late origin to the Pentateuch, are applicable here. He says (*History of the Jews*, I. p. 132, 3rd edition): 'But there is one criticism which I trust it may not be presumptuous to submit to the critical school. There seems to me a fatal fallacy in the groundwork of much of their argument. Their minute inferences, and conclusions drawn from slight premises seem to presuppose an integrity and perfect accuracy in the existing text, not in itself probable, and certainly utterly inconsistent with the general principles of their criticisms. They are in this respect, and in this alone, almost at one with the most rigid adherents of verbal inspiration.'

the one guide through these doubts to certainties, is an impartial temper : and this will be the easier to preserve, if we are on our guard against the ambition of acquiring complete knowledge while partial alone is possible for us. And I would remind the reader that in the case before us, it will be better—he will find more of the satisfaction which comes of real knowledge and nothing else—if he suspends his judgment till he can really see to the bottom of the difficulty with his own eyes, and does not attempt to persuade himself by partial statements and arguments that he has found a complete solution which his cooler judgment will disavow.

Yet the positive, matter-of-fact, method has served us hitherto : taking this book as we found it, and for what it professed to be, and the arrangement of its contents as an integral part of the text, no less needful to be studied than the grammar and logic of the sentences, yet ascertaining at every step whether we were on firm ground, we have hitherto found the road plain enough : and while the critics do point out some apparent indications that our path now ends in what the haze of their speculations cannot make me call other than a sheer precipice, there is still a good hope that this seeming precipice is only the arrival of the road at the brow of a hill, from which, when we get to it, the view will be clearer and more extensive, and the forward road more plain than ever. Let us then return to the book as it is, and hear its own story, as far as we can make it out.

We have found, on examination, that there is no valid reason for doubting, that there is satisfactory reason for deciding, that all the prophecies hitherto under our consideration, are the genuine writings of Isaiah ; and that each of them stands in its proper place : and from their contents we have gradually obtained a distinct acquaintance with the prophet's times, with his personal character, and with the nature and course of his political career. Uzziah's able administration, both foreign and domestic, with enough of military discipline, and actual warfare, to give manly energy to the people, yet with a still greater care for agriculture, trade, and commerce by land and sea,

had raised Judah to a high point of material prosperity ; and the impulse thus imparted to it continued during the reign of his successor Jotham, whose nobles and statesmen, like himself, not only inherited their fathers' political maxims and habits along with their wealth and honours, but had also been trained in their practical school. But their prosperity became merely material. Their morality was often no more than an employment of the forms and the ministers of the law to effect iniquitous and criminal objects ; and their religion a performance of the mosaic ritual, by men who did not conceal the sceptical opinions, or the superstitious idolatries, which had taken the place of a living faith in their minds, accordingly as these happened to be intellectual or formal. Consequently, when the third generation—that of Ahaz—succeeded, it was too completely enervated by luxury and vice to maintain the traditional policy even against such feeble enemies as Ephraim, Syria, or Philistia, and still less to make head against the truly formidable power which had begun again to threaten the world from Assyria. A crisis, or judgment day, had arrived, in which the general corruption and depravity must be punished, or else truth and righteousness would be permanently superseded by iniquity, and selfishness, and a mere kingdom of evil. And the sentence then, as always, was executed through the providential coincidence of this attack from the scourge of God with the moment when long-continued vice had produced that internal weakness and imbecility which are its proper fruits ; according to the law which has united sin and its punishment in inevitable sequence, and provided that the loss of ordinary intelligence and ability to avoid the latter shall be one of the links of the chain. The accumulated wealth of the country was exhausted in buying, or rather trying to buy, the protection, or the forbearance, of the Assyrian hordes, who not only wasted the land year after year, when it was cultivated, but prevented its cultivation by carrying the inhabitants into slavery, and especially to Babylon, the people of which seem, according to Micah, Isaiah's contemporary, as well as to himself, to have taken a chief part in the oppression of Israel. But reformation

was the end, and punishment only the means,—the anger of a Father not only ready, but longing, to forgive his children, and to receive them again to his heart : and while the old vicious generation was thus gradually rooted out, a new one, of which Isaiah, Hezekiah, and Eliakim, were the leaders, grew up under the salutary though trying discipline of national humiliation and suffering. And when this discipline had done all that it could do for that time ; when God had by it taught his people all that they were capable of learning from it, without being wholly consumed in the process ; and when he had at least secured a permanent result for the world, if not for a people too perverse to partake therein ; he delivered Judah from its great oppressors, and restored it to peace and prosperity under its king.

Men are the agents, God himself being present to direct them, in the accomplishment of the laws of his moral government of the world : and it was a main part of Isaiah's mission to 'make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes, lest they should see and understand, and convert and be healed.' His deprecatory question 'Lord, how long,' is illustrated by his habitual practice of immediately following up his warnings and denunciations with consolatory promises : and if it ever seemed to him that the melancholy task was imposed by an unpitying sternness, he would have learnt that it was not so, when it was adequately explained by the events of after years. These showed that, whatever worth the national reformation under Hezekiah possessed, it did owe to the long continuance of the previous punishment ; and that, even as it was, this had not been enough to make any permanent impression, but that in simple fact the people had been allowed to 'convert and be healed' too soon, and that the whole process had to be gone through again, with redoubled severity. And while the short narrative we have lately been considering in the thirty-ninth chapter, tells us how unflinchingly Isaiah threw down, with his own hands, the structure of national prospects which he had been building up during a ministry of near fifty years, the subsequent chapters, to the end of the

book, show him deliberately raising it again, in a manner exactly consistent with his whole previous character and teaching. And consistent alike in its resemblances and its differences : for while the man and the prophet with whom we have become so familiar in the past prophecies, meets us throughout the new, in his old individual shape, we recognize and identify him, not more by his faith and hopes, his philosophy and imagination, and his whole method of looking at men and things, and God's government of both, than by his wonted exercise of that prerogative of a man of genius, and a prophet of God, by which he adapts himself, and his teaching, to the new necessities which this new experience had revealed. And though I do not forget that there is no more perfect unity than that which results from the work of successive labourers actuated by the same idea, of which the Book of Psalms, the Bible itself, and, in another kind, the building of York cathedral, are instances ; and though it would be possible to make out a very good case in favour of such being the unity of the book before us, if we only had a foundation of fact to begin with ; still I appeal with confidence to the judgment of every thorough and matter-of-fact student of our text, whether there is not complete consistency and coherency in the mind and writings of the one man Isaiah ; and whether the theory which divides him into an Isaiah and a 'Pseudo-Isaiah,' or 'Great Unnamed,' does not deprive the former, if not also the latter, half, of much more than half its meaning. To myself it almost seems that, if these latter prophecies had been lost, some Cuvier or Owen of human science might be conceived restoring them in their actual shape, from the indications of their law and germ in his earlier writings. And, on the other hand, I am irresistibly reminded of the Jewish tradition, that Isaiah was sawn asunder by those who misunderstood, and denied, his real office and powers :—and think how that tradition has been, by a reversal of the ordinary process, provided with its philosophical idea, and transformed into a regular myth, after 2000 years of mere historical existence.

The 'years that bring the philosophic mind'* had come

* I have already quoted this line from Wordsworth's 'Ode,' in connection

to Isaiah, with the last qualification needed to enable him to complete one of the few works which are 'not for an age, but for all time.' He had, indeed, shown himself, by what he had done, well prepared for what yet remained. If he had reason, after delivering Jehovah's last message to Hezekiah, to exclaim with the Psalmist, 'My spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate;' he knew how to add, 'I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.'* And now that he had understood, and unequivocally declared in the name of Jehovah, and as his prophet, that his early warnings that the cities of Judah should be without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and that Jehovah should remove men far away, and there should be a great forsaking in the land, had not been FULFILLED in the late years of calamity; that there was still to come a captivity, not of many inhabitants, but of the nation and its king; and a destruction, not of villages and towns, but of Jerusalem and the temple, when, in the words of his contemporary, 'Zion should be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the temple a forest, and the Daughter of Zion, the nation itself, should go forth out of the city, even to Babylon;† he would be no less earnest to discover and to declare when, and how, were to be realized his own corresponding promises that 'Zion should be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; that she should be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city; that in her should reign a king of the house of David, of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end, and of which the blessings, spiritual no less than temporal, should not be limited to Israel, but extended to all nations, who should go up to the mountain

with this subject: but the whole Ode, including the Title and the Motto, may be read as a most instructive comment upon the whole spirit of prophecy, as exhibited by Isaiah; and especially as to the relation between these latter chapters and the earlier ones. Our seer, like the Hebrew one, teaches us how to connect 'the pansy at our feet' with 'truths that wake to perish never;' and to understand how 'our noisy years' may 'seem moments in the being of the eternal Silence.'

* Psalm cxliii. 4, 5.

† The passage has been already quoted on the other side: the reader should consider its bearing both ways.

of Jehovah and to the house of the God of Jacob to be taught of his ways, and to walk in his paths, and whom the LORD of hosts should bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance.' And the latter half of the book tells us the result:—that the human and finite ideals of his youth, which he had expected to see realized in the fruits of his own ministry and Hezekiah's reign, had failed (as all such ideals do) like the flower of the field, though not till they had served their purpose both for his countrymen and himself; but that to replace them there had been meanwhile maturing, and now was revealed to his purged and illumined eye, God's divine and infinite ideal of the destinies of Israel and mankind. His faith and hopes, and the whole tenour of his teaching, had from the first been based, not upon the merits of his nation but upon God's original choice of them without any previous merit on their part, upon his good-will towards them, and upon his faithfulness in keeping the covenant he had made with them, however they might break it: and this purpose of goodness, of free grace, must remain still, and could as little be overcome by new sins as by the old ones. And yet what could any kings and prophets do more, nay, what could God himself do, that he had not done, to effect it in the face of such inveterate resistance, and even incapacity? The answer, we may be sure, came to Isaiah through that diligent inquiry with which St. Peter, who entered so heartily into the spirit of the great and good of his own people, tells us it was the habit of the prophets to 'search what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.'* He would ask himself what, more than he had hitherto supposed, was contained in those predictions which he had been moved to utter † when he and his disciples were, not only sharing the calamities which overwhelmed the nation at the beginning of the reign of Ahaz, but also bearing the contempt and persecutions of their unbelieving countrymen—predictions, that they were to look, for relief and triumph, to the

* 1 Peter i. 10, 11.

† Chapters viii. ix

birth of a Child of the house of David, whose name should be called 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God : ' and thus meditating upon these, and all the rest of his past prophecies, he would have been—we see that he actually was—at last prepared to receive, and to make known, a still more glorious revelation of God's counsels than had yet been made to him. This declared that the invisible LORD and Guide of the nation would come in his own person and effect that deliverance which his most pious representatives were unequal to accomplish, by bearing the sins of the nation as they could not be borne by any other king or prophet, however devoted to suffer, and to do all things for the nation's sake : and that out of this deliverance should spring, not a mere restoration and re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel under the Branch of the Stem of Jesse, but a universal kingdom, and one which in order to be universal would be spiritual, established in the hearts and lives of its subjects ; and, therefore, no longer dependent on outward circumstances of national peace and prosperity for its development ; but able, if need were, to found, and continually expand, itself, in spite, nay by help, of the absence of these things.

The idea of the whole Book of Isaiah is the same—God's government of Israel and mankind according to the laws which he has given for their relations to himself and to each other : but in the first part Isaiah is always seeking for, and setting forth, this idea in the events of his own times ; and in the second half he contemplates the idea in itself, and only embodies it in such shadowy anticipations of the future as his imagination can project from the facts and probabilities of his own time ; though into these shadowy forms he throws himself so completely, that it is often very hard for us not to think that they are the realities, and he—Isaiah—imaginary. This, I believe, is the real clue to that mixture of visionary indistinctness and historical literalness, which enables the advocates of the Pseudo-Isaian theory, and their opponents, each to make out so good a case : and, if so, what the reader wants is, not to decide between two rival sets of arguments, either of which may any day be replaced by another which the old victor

cannot resist, but by study of the book itself to acquire, if possible, the power of putting himself in the prophet's position, and looking at things as he looked at them. He must try and realize what Pope meant when, with a poet's feeling, he described Isaiah as 'the bard rapt into future times;' and what St. Peter, who gives us the true theological, as the other does the true human side, meant by saying, that 'it was revealed to the prophets, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now preached to us in the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?'

* This realization is difficult, and can only be hoped for by help of that same guidance which led the Apostle thither, and which always supplies—even to the most prosaic—so much of the poetic faculty as the end demands. No mere logical or literary criticism will bring a man far on this road, still less do as a substitute for his actually taking the journey himself; but, perhaps, some of the obstacles at first setting off may be cleared away by such considerations as I have already suggested on the present, and previous occasions, and to which I now venture to make one or two additions.

The progress of the universe under God's plan has brought us to a very different position, and point of view, from that where the ancient world stood: we too have a future before us (and in these very days a wider and more glorious future is opening than mankind has yet seen), but much of their future has become our past; and we look back on great accomplished facts, and fixed starting-points for our progress, which to them were still unrealized ideals,—buildings of which they were to announce the plans, but not themselves to lay the foundations, much less to begin our task, which is to raise the superstructure, now that their children and our fathers have done that intermediate work. This is more or less the case with all ancient history; but especially so with that of the Hebrews, which is a perpetual prophecy, and looking forward to what should come afterwards from all that the nation was doing then in a corner. It is easy enough to

* 1 Peter i. 12.

get rid of any amount, more or less according to individual taste, of the meaning either of particular parts, or of the whole tenour of Hebrew thought and feeling, laws and institutions; but such criticism is not really historical. And as I have already noticed, the way in which Isaiah here projects himself into the future is not to be set aside as fictitious, because it somewhat varies from that which he, and other prophets, adopt on other occasions. We must not select our facts by the test of a merely nineteenth-century, European, notion of the human mind and its capacities; nor must we exclude all such specimens of Hebrew prophecy as the 50th and 51st chapters of Jeremiah,* as well as the chapters of Isaiah now before us, and those earlier ones which have been pointed out as they occurred, and then frame, by induction from the remaining materials, a theory by which to test the others. While I agree that some previous examination and selection of facts is necessary on such occasions, I must repeat that this is no fair or scientific performance of the duty. The difficulty of the word *Cyrus*, and of the historical tone of parts of these chapters, is not cleared up, but only put in a new, if not aggravated shape, by the supposition of the late origin of the text: and though modern experience affords us no instance of such a projection not merely of the mind, but (so to speak) of the person, of a writer into the future, as is supposed in those chapters of Jeremiah, the others of Isaiah, and above all, these before us,—yet the analogous power which Shakspeare habitually exercises, of so identifying himself with an indefinite variety of times and persons, that no criticism has ever been able to distinguish him from them, is proof enough that there is nothing incredible, nothing non-human, in such a representation of the prophetic faculty, as they exhibit if we accept them as in the main genuine, though with the qualification suggested above. And therefore we have a right to take the one as well as the other set of facts—the one as well as the other phenomena of prophecy—as the basis of our induction: and if the old orthodox view is then

* Gesenius admits the genuineness of these; Ewald denies it, more consistently with their common theory.

shown to have been too limited, and to require modification as well as expansion, we may yet be sure, that in proportion as it is the more positive and matter-of-fact, so it is the truer and more scientific; and that we shall find that the new will harmonize with the old, in proportion as we enlarge—not our theories but—our basis of facts, and inductions from facts.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ISAIAH XL.—LXVI.—THE VISION OF THE EXILE AND RETURN.—THE TRANSITORY AND THE PERMANENT.—THE GOD OF NATURE, AND OF MAN.—THE POWERLESS GODS OF THE NATIONS.—THE JEWISH INSTITUTION OF THE REDEEMER.—ITS EFFECT ON THE MORE ENLIGHTENED JEWS.—THE DELIVERER, KING, AND TEACHER.—THE WORK OF ISAIAH AND HEZEKIAH.—ITS SUCCESS AND ITS FAILURE.—JEWISH IDEA OF THE MESSIAH.—ITS RELATION TO THEIR POLITICAL LIFE.—ATONEMENT A HUMAN FACT.—A RATIONAL IDEA.—UNION OF HALF-TRUTHS.—THE MESSIAH OF THE GOSPEL.—THE PROPHETS AND THE APOSTLES.—ISAIAH'S SCIENCE OF POLITICS.—HIS DEATH.—HIS TRIUMPH.

OF the manifest continuity of these twenty-six chapters, it has been well said that 'the whole flows on like a river, poured forth at one time from a breast entirely possessed and filled by the Holy Spirit : ' and we might add, that the frequent repetition of the same thoughts, resembling the rise and fall of the waves, while the stream holds its steady, onward, course, is among the indications that the inspired seer speaks as the vision rises before his illumined eye, and as the word of Jehovah impels him to describe it ; and that he did not sit down to write with any systematic and deliberate arrangement of all that he had to say.

The first two verses of chapter xl. form an introduction, in which the prophet throws himself into the future, beyond the end of the great national judgment foretold in the last chapter. The great desert between Babylon and Judea suggests the like imagery with that which Isaiah had already employed to express the like idea in chapter xxxv. : and probably both here, and there, may be traced an under-thought of the passage of Israel through the wilderness when he came out of Egypt. But the prophet's language now is more ideal than before ; and we shall ex-

clude a main part, if not the whole, of his meaning, if we introduce arbitrary limitations to define what he leaves indefinite, and pronounce, more positively than his own words do, that he supposes himself in Babylon, or Jerusalem, or the Desert; or that he does, or does not, represent Jehovah as bringing back the captive nation from the former city. The period is no doubt that of a Captivity, and not of the reign of Hezekiah; but the words and images of the prophet show that his eye glances from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, with little restraint of time and place: with the ubiquity of genius and of inspiration, he sees the appointed term of Israel's hard warfare arrived; he hears the herald of the approaching Jehovah; he calls on Jerusalem and Zion, themselves free and rejoicing in a moment, to spread the good tidings among the other cities of Judah, and to declare that this Jehovah is their own King, and their God. What enemies he has been triumphing over, what deliverance he has been effecting, whether he comes alone to a people already waiting to receive him, or is bringing them with him, redeemed or recovered from captivity, the vision defines not: but it sees that the triumph will be complete, and the glory manifest; that the LORD God will do the whole work that has to be done, and earn the effectual deliverance of his people; and that, with a love no less tender than his power is strong, 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom; and shall gently lead the milch ewes.'

The prophet sees into the dark night of the future only by momentary flashes of light; but his vision is still farther interrupted by the doubt expressed in verses 6 and 7, where he seems to ask, How can these promises of God be more effectual now than before, when, after they had been made in a manner apparently so ample, we saw them all nullified by that act of Hezekiah? And the other voice within him,—'voices of two different natures,'—replies, that it is true that man is at best so weak and sinful, that if God leaves him for a moment, to try him, and to know all that is in his heart, he falls away

as certainly as the grass withers when the wind of heaven blows on it : but what then ? ‘The grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever :’ that Word which in nature has been so efficacious, that every created thing still keeps the whole law and course which was imposed on it when, in the first day of its creation, God SAID, Let it be so, can and will be no less informative and quickening in the spirit of man. Isaiah looks on the whole Jewish polity, which had in his days attained to the highest development of which it was capable ; he sees and feels that not in this is there any continuance, anything which can be really trusted in for strength, and righteousness, and eternal life ; and thus he is able to hear and understand the voice which declares that those things may and will fade like grass, yet that men may rise out of this transitory state, by laying hold on the permanence of God. And what the prophet thus implies, the apostle, in the fulness of time, could actually assert, when he quotes these words, and explains, that while man’s corruptible nature is like the fading grass, the gospel preaches to us that we may be born again to a new and incorruptible life, by the Word of God ; and that thus being made partakers of the divine nature, we may each personally escape the corruption which is in the world, and purify our souls in obeying the truth through the spirit ; and at the same time become members of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.*

Cicero could ask, ‘When we look at the heavens, first in all their unclouded beauty, and then with such rapid changes passing over their face ; when we consider the alternations of day and night, and the succession of the four several seasons ; when we behold the sun which regulates all these, and the moon and stars all keeping their courses with unfailing constancy ; can we doubt that some present and efficient ruler is over them ?’† And Seneca says,

* 1 Peter i. 22 to ii. 10 ; 2 Peter i. 4. All the epistles indeed, from first to last, are expositions of the practical substitution, wrought by Christ, of ‘the power of an endless life’ for ‘the law of a carnal commandment,’ as Paul expresses it.

† *Tusc. Quæst. i.*

‘They all continue, not because they are eternal, but because the watchfulness of their governor protects them : imperishable things need no guardian ; but these are preserved by their maker, who, by his power, controls their natural tendency to decay.’* And Hume, though his philosophy was irreligious in comparison with that of either Roman, could raise his hands to the starry sky, and show that he too had a human heart, by exclaiming to Fergusson, ‘O Adam, how can a man look at that, and not believe in a God!’ But Isaiah, while he here handles this argument with an eloquence sublimer and more earnest than any of theirs, does not stop in this ‘Court of the Gentiles,’ but makes that assertion of the reality and power of the Creator which is their end, a step to his higher conclusion, that he is also the God of the spirits of men ; and that the wisdom and power which he exhibits in nature are but the symbols that ‘He fainteth not, neither is weary,—there is no searching of his understanding,’ in a region in which natural order and life are of no avail. It may seem at first as though this were to prove a higher by a lower attribute of God : but the works of creation have this special effect, that they bear witness that God is in himself, and not merely in relation with us ; and then, through this revelation of an Absolute Being in creation, we are the easier led on to apprehend the higher truth and fact of an Absolute God of our spirits, in whom we are to trust, even though this or that accustomed relation between him and us seems to have failed. The pious Israelite, the Nation, the Church, must not suppose that, because their way is hid from themselves, and nothing appears but the oppression of utter desolation of spirit and circumstances, therefore God does not see the way, and is not actually working it out, and preparing to do his people right and justice, by methods not the less wise because they are for the time inscrutable. Let man wait for God :—‘They that wait on Jehovah shall renew their strength : they shall lift up their wings like eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; they shall walk, and not faint.’

In reply to Israel's complaint (xl. 27) that his cause against the heathen oppressors is neglected or dismissed by the Great Judge, God now (chapter xli. 1) summons the nations to his court of justice; and as Israel had just been assured that, if they would wait upon Jehovah, they would renew their strength, and discern his wisdom, an interval is granted to the heathens and their gods, in which they too may renew their strength, and have time to produce evidence of the powers of design and action possessed by their gods, and in virtue of which they claim the right to keep Israel in subjection. The solemn pause thus allowed—'Keep silence . . . : then let them speak'—is filled (how bitter the irony!) by the nations employing their carpenters and goldsmiths to make a particularly good and strong set of gods, because there is a general alarm that the emergency is great. For it is already seen that the judgment goes against them by default: that these gods can show no plans, can do nothing good or bad; and that they, and their worshippers, have neither right nor power to break up the designs of Almighty Wisdom. They have been trying to do this, by those oppressions of Israel which were only permitted for a time, because they fell into and formed a part of God's own plan. But Israel had from the first an appointed and chief place in that plan: He who is at once King of Israel and God of all the earth, has been maintaining his chosen people in their place, generation after generation, when he made Abraham his friend, and gave the blessing to his seed, and when he made the rock yield springs of water under the rod of Moses: and now, though they are reduced to extremity of weakness and dismay, the Holy One of Israel bids them fear not, for he has taken upon himself to be their Redeemer.

In order to understand and realize the meaning and force of this word—Redeemer—throughout Isaiah's prophecies, as indeed wherever it occurs in the Hebrew books, we must consider what the institution and office of the 'Goel' or Redeemer, in the Hebrew commonwealth, actually was. It was a properly patriarchal office: yet, with a provision for the progressive as well as the conser-

vative element, such as is not always found in patriarchal institutions, it was an office which devolved rather on the elder brother than on the father ; on the near and powerful kinsman of the rising generation, rather than on the head of the family. It was his duty, when any branch of the family fell into decay, to ransom both the patrimonial land and the enslaved owner ; to avenge their blood when shed in feud ; and to marry the childless widow, and so keep alive in Israel the name and line of her first husband. The Book of Ruth supplies living lineaments to the legal enactments of Moses :* and when we once accustom ourselves to the Jewish point of view, and see the actual institution, and its workings, as they saw it, we shall perceive that these must have given the characteristics of a 'Goel,' or Redeemer, to many a national hero,—to a Moses, a Joshua, or a Samson, as well as to a Joseph whom 'God sent before' his father's house, 'to preserve them a posterity in the earth, and to save them with a great deliverance.' Thus there grew up a distinct and well understood faith, in the minds of the more experienced and enlightened Jews, of an invisible Redeemer, of whom these were but the earthly and partial representatives. This faith we recognize in Jacob, when he invoked for Joseph's sons the guardianship of the 'God who had fed him all his life long, and the Angel which had redeemed him from all evil ;† by Job, when he met the worst evils of the present time with the assertion, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth ;‡ and by Isaiah, throughout the prophecies before us. Vitringa, after quoting these words of Jacob, and of Job, adds, 'That under the Old Economy that Angel—the assertor and avenger—did not discharge the whole office to which he was destined : yet in every liberation of the people of God, and every vindication of their rights which he did effect, the Church might discern, as in a type, the preludings§ of

* Leviticus xxv. 24, ff. ; Numbers xxxv. 19, ff. The word translated 'Avenger' in the latter passage is the same (Goel) as 'Redeemer' in the former.

† Genesis xlviii. 16.

‡ Job xix. 25.

§ *Præludebat huic officio.* So an English divine speaks of 'the preludings of the incarnation.'

that office of Redeemer, which, by the will of the Father, he was to fulfil in the last times.'

A Redeemer, or Deliverer, is appointed (chapter xlii.) to carry out the judgment pronounced upon the islands and nations just called to trial. And this judgment is farther explained to be, on the one hand, a moral conversion of the Gentiles by means capable of addressing their mind and spirit; and on the other, a triumph over all irreclaimable rebels, by Jehovah going forth as a man of war, and himself making waste the mountains and hills, and giving occasion to the righteous, not only of Israel but also of the Gentiles, to give glory to him, and to rejoice in the accomplishment of the great design of the universe which he alone, and none of the graven images, had framed from the beginning. But in the previous chapter (xli. 2) there is another description of the same, or another, deliverer, variously interpreted to refer to Cyrus, to Abraham and his posterity, to Christ, or to the Gospel under the name of 'righteousness:' and—with the reservation that there is no special prediction of Cyrus—I am unable to exclude any of these meanings, here and in the like passages, or to explain their concurrence or interchange, except by recognizing the whole as a vision or discourse in which the speaker has taken up an ideal position far removed from his actual one, and allows his imagination to carry him where it will, uncurbed by logical forms. It is generally true, that the more we can bring together the partial and divergent lights of the commentators of different periods and modes of thinking, and the more careful we are that it is on the simple text itself, and not on their statement of it, that we concentrate their rays, the more likely are we to get at least a glimpse of its real, adequate meaning. And nowhere is this more the case than in these descriptions of the 'Servant of God,' which fill so large a part of the rest of the book. The everlasting God, Jehovah the Creator of the ends of the earth, has from the beginning planned, and brought into operation, a moral, political, spiritual constitution and order, as well as a physical world; and he has chosen one nation for the first and normal embodiment and illustration of the

design, and to be the main instrument for carrying it out in all other nations, and for uniting them in an universal brotherhood: and now that this nation has itself sunk under the evils out of which it was to lead the others, the original plan provides an adequate Redeemer and Guide for it and them. That the work extends over ages of time, employs races as well as individuals, and is in the main spiritual, and the work of God himself, is plainly declared by the prophet. If at one or two points of his vision he sees that one external portion of the work is to be effected by some friendly though heathen conqueror, yet he chiefly looks either for a direct interposition of divine power, as in the overthrow of Sennacherib; or else for the appearance of a hero like David, who will lead his people to fight their own battle. And side by side with this idea of the Redeemer, appear, throughout the book, those of the King, and the Prophet or Teacher: while each of these finds its counterpart in the answering images of Israel and the Church. The nation is redeemed from Babylon, and from Edom, which is the symbol of Babylon, as Babylon is of all godless tyranny: it is established in a prosperity never known by Hezekiah or Solomon; it is secured in possession of these blessings by a covenant that they shall have a more spiritual guidance than heretofore:* and all this is but the inmost circle of the ever-widening, universal Church, which is indeed for the most part depicted as a political and social subordination of the Gentiles to Israel, but in more than one place as a real illumination and spiritual organization of the Gentiles themselves, by the LORD of Israel, who employs his chosen people as instruments for that, the original end for which they were chosen. Thus, in chapter xlii. 6, 'I, Jehovah, will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;' and again, in chapter xlix. 6, 'And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.'

* Chapter lix. 21.

—And in chapter li., verses 4—6, the correspondence of which with the opening verses of chapter ii. is so marked,—‘Hearken unto me, my people, and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall go forth from me, and I will establish my judgment for a light of the nations. My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the nations: the isles shall wait upon me; and in mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.’

If the reader will forgive some unavoidable repetition, he may perhaps find our subject still clearer, if we follow into farther detail that method—which, though as old as St. Peter, is as new as the most modern critical science,—of considering the prophet’s meaning in the light in which he must have himself contemplated it, and also in that in which it presents itself to us who live after the coming of Christ. Isaiah, meditating upon the experience of his past life, would find that the various qualifications of an adequate Redeemer, King, and Teacher, unfolded themselves before him, at the same time with his vision of the depressed and destitute state of Israel and the world, and of the divine and universal polity which was to be brought out of these. He had been called to the office of prophet, in the days of Uzziah, by Jehovah, who had elected him to be his servant, and upheld him in his duty by continually ‘putting his spirit upon him.’* He was endowed with ‘the tongue of the learned’ in no ordinary measure, and might have ‘made his voice to be heard in the streets,’ while a sympathizing audience approved his haughtiest eloquence, if he had only used it to enforce the maxims of worldly wisdom; but he had not turned back from the harder task, of preaching and teaching in all humility and patience the unpalatable doctrine of a holy, God-trusting life. He had taken care, neither to ‘break the

* Chapter xlii. 1, ff.

bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax,' when his ministry produced some weak result; nor to suffer his own spirit to be broken and quenched, when all result seemed wanting, and when he had to submit to be 'despised by man and abhorred by the nation,'* or even (like so many prophets before and after him,† and as was most probably his lot in the reign of Ahaz) to 'give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.'‡ And like other 'preachers of righteousness in the great congregation,'§ he had protested continually against that abuse of the Levitical sacrifices which turned them into an *opus operatum*;|| and like them, he had learnt that the meaning of these sacrifices must be realized by a man sacrificing himself, 'pouring out his soul,'¶ and that not for himself only, but for his brethren also. And Hezekiah—the king co-operating with the prophet in the work of national reformation—had, by a like life of toil and self-sacrifice, contended with the same, or corresponding, obstacles in his efforts to 'bring forth justice in, and by, the force of truth,' and to 'establish it in the land,' and 'extend it to the nations' around. And lastly, the 'Angel of Jehovah' had destroyed the power of Sennacherib, and compelled him to let his captives return to their own land, there to enjoy peace and prosperity under their own king and laws, and to worship their own God in Zion. These 'former things had come to pass,' and Isaiah could distinguish the design and the hand of God in them, no less than in his creating the heavens, spreading out the earth, and giving breath to the people upon it: but he had also seen that the deliverance, and restoration, and reformation, effected by these means were only temporary and external; and thus he would be led to perceive that a mightier Prophet than himself, a greater King than Hezekiah, a more effectual Redeemer than that Angel, was needed, and might be

* Chapter xlix. 7.

† Matthew xxxiii. 29—39; Hebrews xi. 35—38; and the whole Jewish history to which these passages refer.

‡ Chapter i. 4—6.

§ Psalm xl. 6—10. See the whole passage.

|| Chapter i. 11; xliii. 23, 24.

¶ Chapter liii. 12.

looked for; and so the idea would dawn upon his inward eye, of the coming of One who could adequately fill all these offices, and really accomplish a work to which no mere man, or angel, was competent, however divinely directed and upheld. For observe—since in this we have the clue to the transition from the expectation of a human, to that of a divine, Redeemer—that the work of Isaiah and Hezekiah, which had so failed of any but an external and temporary result, had not been itself external and temporary, but spiritual, and wrought by spiritual men, who made ‘righteousness the girdle of their loins, and faithfulness the girdle of their reins;’ and who had sacrificed themselves, and not bulls and goats, for their nation, and yet with no more efficacy than if it had been only the latter. Nothing better in *degree*, could supply the want: what man could do had been done, and it was now proved that something different in *kind* was required, something which could raise humanity above itself,

‘And give to every power a double power,
Above their functions and their offices.’

And just in proportion as Isaiah, and those who heard his words, could enter into the meaning of this coming of the Messiah, the God-man, could they realize that they had, after all, a firm ground of faith and hope to stand on. The idea of the Messiah is the keystone of the arch of prophecy, and makes a living temple of Jewish history: he who had it found it again possible to see a divine life and meaning in the office and acts of each particular king and prophet; in the nation; and in each of its constituted and corporate orders; even while it could no longer be questioned that they were all in themselves but transitory symbols. And thus, for us too, in like manner—if this prophecy of the ‘Servant of Jehovah,’ which is the central subject of these last twenty-six chapters of Isaiah, be in this manner understood to speak of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of David, it throws a clear light upon all the other interpretations which have been offered as substitutes for this. The ‘Servant of Jehovah’ has been explained to be Cyrus, Isaiah himself, Hezekiah,

Josiah, Jeremiah, or some unknown prophet : the House of David, the Maccabees, the Jewish Nobles in the times of the Exile : the Priesthood, the Order of Prophets, the Jewish Nation, and the spiritual Israel, or Church in the nation : and it is very interesting and instructive to see how much reason may be adduced in favour of each of these interpretations, and yet how each is unable to hold its place, for more than a moment ; because each, though a shadow, is only a shadow, and a finite as well as transient image of the infinite and substantive Original. Let the words of the prophet be applied, in as far as they are applicable, to each of these, and to all other, ‘preludings’ of the incarnation : it will not be the less true, it will be even the more manifest, that only in the coming of our LORD Jesus Christ were they FULFILLED.

It is not denied by their authors or advocates, that some of the interpretations of chapter liii., above enumerated, are intended to supersede the belief that Jesus is the Christ, or that there is either Christ, or Prophecy, in the Christian sense ; and they say that they thus offer us a rational explanation, instead of an unintelligible dogma of theology. But we must not mistake them, because they mistake us. They do recognize a valuable half-truth, which theologians have too much overlooked ; and the neglect of which has made the Christian idea of the Atonement seem too much like an arbitrary dogma, when it might have been shown as well as felt (for the latter it always has been) to be the fullest and most luminous manifestation of an universal law, and one with which, in its lower operations, we are all more or less acquainted. The passage I have already referred to in the 40th Psalm, is enough for mere logical proof that the idea of self-sacrifice for others, as the highest and most effective duty, was intelligible to the more enlightened at least of the ancient Hebrews ; but if any one has any difficulty in realizing how Isaiah could, nay must, have given the words of this chapter liii., a sound, coherent sense, derived from his own experience and observation, I would pray him to look into his own experience and observation in the matter. The soft answer which

restores good humour in a casual conversation ; the forbearance with which the statesman meets the ignorances and prejudices, the censures and the slanders, of those to whom he only sues for leave to do them good ; the work of the minister of the Gospel, of which St. Paul, among other hardly less strong expressions, asserts that 'he fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ,'* are but instances of an universal law of man's constitution, discoverable in all human relationships, and which enacts that men can, and do, endure the evil doings of their brethren, in such sort that through that endurance on the part of the innocent the guilty are freed from the power—from both the guilt and the punishment—of their ill deeds. And if these instances seem insignificant or foreign, there is one which, in some form or other, must have come home to the heart of every one not deficient in the commonest observation and sympathies. There is hardly any one but has known some household in which, year after year, selfishness and worldliness, and want of family affection, have been apparent enough ; and yet, instead of the moral break-up which might have been expected, and the final moral ruin of the various members, the original bond of union has held together : there has plainly been some counteracting, redeeming, power at work ; and at last it has turned out that, not only has the course of that household not been downward to ruin, but has taken a new and upward direction, when some outward event, a death, or a marriage, brought to a crisis the elements of a change long maturing in secret. This, I say, is the commonest of all stories ; and when we look again to see what is that redeeming power, ever at work for those who know and care nothing about it, we always find that there is some member of that family—oftenest the wife or mother—who is silently bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, for them, but for her or himself expecting little or nothing in this world but the rest of the grave. Such a one is really bearing the sins of that household, and thus saving them from the guilt as well as punishment of sin : it is no dogma, no forensic phrase

* Colossians i. 24.

transferred by way of illustration from the practice of the law courts ; but a fact, a vital formation, actually taking place, here, under our very eyes. He who has seen and understood this fact, in any one of its common, daily shapes, needs no commentary on such words as—‘ His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men :—he hath no form, nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; yet did we esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : as a lamb that is brought to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. And who of his generation will consider that he was cut off, out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people :—stricken for them ? Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he hath poured out his soul unto death : and he was numbered with the transgressors ; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.’

We may notice the expression ‘ It pleased Jehovah ’ to bruise him, which, according to the usual Hebrew spirit, and way of looking at things, is equivalent to our saying

that it is an ultimate fact, the original seat of a law. And this law is, that one human will can unite itself with another, and raise up the latter out of a state of sin and misery, not otherwise to be escaped from, if it (the former) consents and submits to be accounted a partaker in the guilt, and therefore, to be actually made a sharer in the misery of that other. But it is a part of the same law,—every instance that can be produced will show it—that no man can thus bear the sins of another unless he be himself blameless in the matter then in hand. In the minor and more outward relationships and duties of life this qualification of blamelessness is to be found of the kind required; for there are virtuous as well as vicious men in the world: but when we go a little deeper, we discover a difficulty which threatens to invalidate all our philosophy, if we attempt to reduce it to practice. Every man, the most virtuous, the meekest, holiest, most loving, no less than the most selfish and vicious, is at heart a sinner; has that inherent defect and corruption in him which we call original sin; and is thereby disqualified from this which—as we have said—is the only way in which man can be saved out of the guilt and misery in which he has involved every relationship of his life. Whatever we may have seen the minister of religion, the patriot, the wife, or the mother, doing, and doing with success, we have in the background the certainty that their good works must be outflanked at last, because the evil which they are saving others from is still there, in themselves: the end may be put off, but must come at last, which the prophet expresses, when he says, ‘I looked, and there was none to help.’ And thus we arrive once more, as Isaiah arrived before us, at the necessity for the coming of One who, because he is God as well as man, is free from this defect; and, therefore, can bear the sins of the whole world, and of each man in it, without failing in the last resort. And thus, and then, each Christian minister, each Christian ruler, each Christian member of a family, will and does receive power to do that in his lower sphere, which has first been done for him in the higher. And thus man, made in the image of God the Creator, is renewed in the image of God the

Saviour ; and can reflect that image among his brethren, having the mind of Christ, and being a fellow-worker with him.*

Thus we do justice to the half-truth, the finite, human, element, in the Jewish and rationalist interpretations, and at the same time bring the Christian interpretation, with its whole truth, human and divine in one, into fuller light than if we overlooked or denied the former. And this is not less the case as to the explanation that the 'Servant of Jehovah' means the Jewish Nation. What was true of the King of the nation, its real Head and Representative, must be true of the nation itself, in as far as it acknowledged him, walked in his light, was clothed with his righteousness, and actuated by his spirit. The history of the foundation of the Church by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, all Jews, and the fact that the Bible is wholly a Jewish book, show how truly and how peculiarly the law came forth from Zion, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem, to all nations ; while the same thing was partially and symbolically effected in the preceding ages of the people. And then, when they 'would not have this man to rule over them,' it became inevitable that they should bear their own sins, which they refused to let him bear for them ; and it may, therefore, well be possible to trace a close resemblance between this prophetic description of the sufferings of the Messiah, with those which the pride and rebellion of the nation have brought upon themselves. And it is interesting, and illustrative, that the periods of history in which the persecutions of the Jews have been most cruel, are (it is said) those in which their writers are found to dwell most earnestly, and with a view to the practical instruction of the people themselves, upon this interpretation. They felt how terribly real its application to themselves was.

The manner in which the New Testament writers assume this prophecy to refer to Jesus Christ,† seems to indicate that, as they were led into all truth, and their eyes opened to understand the meaning of Moses and the Prophets,—

* Philipp. ii. 4—11.

† Matthew viii. 17 ; John xi. 51 ; Acts viii. 32 ; 1 Peter ii. 23—25.

the records of God's counsels and works—they perceived, on the one hand, what the character of the Messiah must be in order to his filling the proper place in those counsels, and, on the other, how this very character was actually exhibited, in all its parts, in the life and conversation of their Master. And thus the two, the idea and the answering fact, united so simply and naturally in their minds, that there seemed no occasion to assert—it was enough to notice—the reality of the union.

There is, in our day, a growing disinclination to attend to those minute correspondences between these words of Isaiah, and the details of our LORD's death and burial, which were once thought—by Paley for instance—so important a part of the evidences of Christianity. It would be easy to suggest grounds for thinking that our philosophy may be as one-sided as that of our fathers in this respect; and that the course of the universe, the working out by God of his original design, may have minute harmonies, and relations of the parts to each other and to the whole. But one advantageous effect of this diminished interest in the literal fulfilment of prophecy, we may notice, in the increased importance which it has allowed prophecy itself—as distinguished from that literal fulfilment—to take. We can answer better than our fathers could, the question, what Prophecy was given for: whether it had not some place of its own, some specific purpose? For if God's purpose in giving it to us had been to supply a ground for such arguments as Paley builds upon it, it would surely have been much more explicit and literal: and again, if the spiritual and practical light to be gained from it were exactly the same as that which the New Testament expositions throw on the death of Christ,—and this would be so, if the one, like the other, is a statement and exposition of facts—then one or the other part of the Bible becomes superfluous. But when we see that Prophecy is the setting forth of God's design, as a Design, we can recognize the method of the Bible, and find that each part of the revelation has its proper meaning, and power of throwing light on the rest. And this chapter liii. of Isaiah, in parti-

cular, exhibits the idea of the Atonement, as an Idea. The facts are recorded in the Gospels and Acts. The Epistles declare and expound the union of the facts with the idea. And, if we will fully understand them in this union, we must also understand, and, therefore, study them, separately.

Induction of the law, from the events of his own time : deduction therefrom of a future realization of that law in universal society:—such are Isaiah's contributions to the science of politics ; while to those who have come after him belongs the verification required to complete the circle. And in following Isaiah in this his method, and then doing our own part, we find, along with a science of politics, a canon of positive criticism, which enables us to investigate the question of the genuineness of the book, without excluding historical evidence, or calling in hypothesis to supply its place. I have shown at so great length the applicability of this method in both respects, in reference to the central subject of Isaiah's whole writings—the Holy One of Israel—that I may best leave the reader to follow it out through the other kindred subjects of which these last twenty-six chapters treat, venturing to assure him that he will find it hold good in these no less than in that. The sinful state of the nation, and its punishment by exile to Babylon ; the destruction of the oppressor, and deliverance of the captives ; the restoration of the nation not merely to outward prosperity, but to, and by, a spiritual life sustained by the constant presence of their LORD, while the irreclaimable are cast out that they may no longer pollute the renewed people ; and the extension of this regenerated society, till it grows from a chosen nation into an universal Church, of which the LORD, the King of Israel, is the Head :—all these, in their various aspects, and with the means by which they are to be brought about, the student will find set forth by Isaiah as they rose before him in vision ; while at the same time he will be able to trace into its details the evidence that this vision, in all its parts, had its counterpart in the events of the prophet's own times, and that it was his insight into the meaning of that actual world,

which made possible to him, and makes intelligible to us, his foresight into the ideal :—ideal to him, but actual to us who are ‘no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God ; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the LORD : in whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’*

Authentic history has preserved no account of the death of Isaiah : but there is no improbability in the Jewish tradition that he was one of the martyrs whose ‘innocent blood Manasseh shed, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other,’† and that the mode of his death was by being sawn asunder, to which the Christian fathers understood reference to be made in Hebrews xi. 37. If Isaiah was twenty years old when he began his ministry, in the last year of the reign of Uzziah, he would have been eighty at the death of Hezekiah. Hengstenberg supposes these latter prophécies to have been written in the days of Manasseh ; and it must be admitted that there is one passage at least in them, which supports this view,—chap. lvi. 9. to lvii. 12,—both in its general picture of the state of society, and in the allusion to the death of the righteous, as taking him away from the evil to come, which cannot but remind us of Hezekiah, and his melancholy consolation that there should be peace and truth in his days. But political and social changes are not made in a moment ; and coming events would have cast their shadows on the last days of Hezekiah and Isaiah, and have made this language suitable in the mouth of the prophet, even though we should prefer to believe that he, as well as the king, was spared the actual sight of the evil. To the objection that, if Isaiah had written in the days of Manasseh, that king’s name would have appeared with the others in the title of the Book, it might be replied that death must always prevent an author from

* Ephesians ii. 19—22.

† 2 Kings xxi. 16.

putting the very last stroke to the collection of his works ; and it might even be argued that there are other indications that such last finish is wanting in the minor arrangements of these twenty-six chapters. But it is unnecessary to refine so much, when we cannot get at certainty after all. The last days, like the last words, of the prophet, pass from the actual into the ideal ; and whether the final act of his life was, like its whole previous course, a surrender of himself to suffer for his people, or whether he was permitted a foretaste, in the repose of an honoured death-bed, of the eternal rest that awaited him when all his worldly task was done, he was secure in the covenant and promise which he had habitually realized for himself, while he declared them to others :—‘ Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily : and thy righteousness shall go before thee ; the glory of Jehovah shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah shall answer, thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.—And thou shalt know that I Jehovah am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer the mighty One of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron : and I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders : but thou shalt call thy walls, Salvation ; and thy gates, Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee : but Jehovah shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.’



APPENDIX.

THE ENGLISH TEXT OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

NOTE.

THE English Text of the Book of Isaiah, which here follows, is that of our Authorized Version, but with some changes and amendments.

A Translation should represent not merely the words and phrases of the Original, but also (as far as possible) its whole character, national, spiritual, literary, such as it would have been if first written in the language to which it is now transferred, and by one to whom that language was his own. And such a Translation of the Hebrew Bible is our Authorized Version, in the main. It gives, not only the words and bare thoughts of the Hebrew text, but its imagination, poetry, and eloquence; its apprehensions of God and man, and of their relations to each other; and its antique stateliness and dignity; and this not in a way of servile imitation but by a living counterpart which is no less English than Hebrew. Such a translation was probably only possible at the time, and under the conditions, of the actual work. It is, in the main, as perfect as can be: there are only some defects of detail to be made good; and some variations which may be permitted for a special purpose like my own.

It is not indeed possible to compare any translation with its original without at first feeling as if we might by some other rendering save some delicate and expressive shade of meaning which we see in the one but not in the other: but the more thoughtfully we try to effect such changes the more do we find how impassable are the limits within which even the best translation can be made to represent the original; and, in the case before us, how those limits have almost always been reached by our translators of the Bible, and reached as it would not be possible for any genius to

reach them now for the first time. I have made many essays, at considerable intervals, to ascertain what improvements are possible in the Authorized Version of Isaiah, by comparing it with the Hebrew, and with the scholarly versions of Lowth, Dathe, Gesenius, Ewald, and Cheyne, as well as with the more merely literal renderings of the principal commentators: but each attempt has brought me back to a more scrupulous and reverent regard to the Old Version; and I can believe that a still repeated revision of my own text would still farther reduce my variations. But it has been my aim to make no alteration which does not really improve the sense, and for which I have not found a fit word or phrase elsewhere in the Bible, or in Shakspeare. If even within these limits I have erred, I hope I may nevertheless have added to those experiments which, though not finally adopted, throw light on what a revised text should be. The changes which I have made are these:—

I have printed the English Text in paragraphs; but these, and their subdivisions, correspond with the chapters, verses, and members of verses, of the Authorized Version, except where the sense required a variation, or where I have kept more strictly to the Masoretic divisions.

I read 'Jehovah' instead of 'the LORD,' except in the expression 'the LORD of Hosts,' and in one or two other instances, where euphony seemed to require the old rendering. For popular and devotional use 'LORD' is no doubt the right word, here, and elsewhere through the Bible, because it assumes and asserts, as often as it occurs, that Jehovah the God of Israel is the God and Lord whom we still believe in, and still worship in our churches and our homes: but, for the historical purpose which I have had before me in this volume, 'Jehovah' seems the more proper word, as more distinctly marking the fact that to the Hebrews of Isaiah's time the first and nearest idea of God was that he was Jehovah the divine King of their nation; while the belief that he was also the God of the whole earth, and the Lord of the spirits of all men, was as yet subordinate to that national faith. And at the same time the name Jehovah is not, like Zeus or Jupiter, the mere symbol of a now dead form of religious belief, but is still in sufficient use in the English Bible, and

in our popular language of theology and devotion, to keep up that recognition of an historical continuity between the old Hebrew and modern Christian faiths which is essential to a complete understanding of the writings of Isaiah. The 'Yahveh,' or 'JHVH,' of some scholars would not meet this requirement, nor indeed some other requirements of a translation.

The other changes which I have made, are—where it is now known that the old rendering was wrong, and what the right rendering is: where, though the rendering is still conjectural, modern scholars have suggested a conjecture more probable than the old one: where the old English word has not become merely archaic but is now used in a different sense from that of our translators: where a word is too coarse for modern taste: and where, as far as I can judge, a really better word can be found to represent the original than that actually given in the Authorized Version.

APPENDIX.

ISAIAH I.

1. 1 THE VISION OF ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ, WHICH HE SAW CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM IN THE DAYS OF UZZIAH, JOTHAM, AHAZ, AND HEZEKIAH, KINGS OF JUDAH.

2 HEAR, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath
spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they
3 have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the
ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth
4 not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,
a seed of evildoers, children that corrupt themselves: they
have forsaken Jehovah, they have despised the Holy One of
5 Israel, they are gone away backward. Why will ye be stricken
any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head
6 is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot
even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds,
and bruises, and festering sores: they have not been closed, nor
7 bound up, nor mollified with oil. Your country is desolate;
your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour
it before your faces, and it is desolate, as wasted by strangers.
8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard: as
9 a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except
the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we
should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto
Gomorrhah.

10 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye rulers of Sodom: give ear
11 unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrhah. What is the
multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith Jehovah: I am

full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts :
and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-
12 goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required
13 this at your hand, to trample my courts ? Bring no more vain
oblations ; incense is an abomination unto me : the new moons
and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with : it
14 is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and
your appointed feasts my soul hateth : they are a burden unto
15 me ; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your
hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye make
many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood.
16 Wash you, make you clean ; put away the evil of your doings
17 from before mine eyes : cease to do evil. Learn to do well ;
seek judgment, restrain the oppressor : right the fatherless,
maintain the cause of the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah : though
your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow ; though
19 they be red like crimson they shall be as wool. If ye be willing
20 and obedient, ye shall feed on the good of the land ; but if ye
refuse and rebel, the sword shall feed on you : for the mouth of
Jehovah hath spoken it.

21 How is the faithful city become an harlot ! It was full of
judgment ; righteousness lodged in it : but now murderers.
22 Thy silver is become dross : thy wine mixed with water. Thy
23 rulers are rebels, and companions of thieves ; every one loveth
gifts, and followeth after rewards : they right not the fatherless,
neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One
of Israel : Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge
25 me of mine enemies. And I will turn my hand upon thee, and
26 purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin. And I
will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at
the beginning : afterward thou shalt be called, The city of
27 righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with
28 judgment : and her converts with righteousness. And the
destruction of the rebels and sinners shall be together : and
29 they that forsake Jehovah shall be consumed. For they shall
be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired : and ye shall be
30 confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. For ye shall
be as an oak whose leaf fadeth : and as a garden that hath no
31 water. And the strong shall become tow, and his work a spark :
and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

II., III., IV.

II. 1 THE WORD THAT ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ SAW CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM.

- 2 AND it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all the nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he shall judge between the nations, and shall give sentence for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
- 5 O house of Jacob: come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah!—For thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, for they be replenished from the East, and are soothsayers like the Philistines: and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures: their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots. Their land also is full of idols: they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust; for fear of Jehovah, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 12 For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every thing proud and lofty: and upon every thing lifted up; and it shall be brought low. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up: and upon all the oaks of Bashan. And upon all the high mountains: and upon all the hills that are lifted up. And upon every high tower: and upon every fenced wall. And upon all the ships of Tarshish: and upon all their pleasant ensigns. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth: for fear of Jehovah, and for the glory of his

- 20 majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats: to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks; for fear of Jehovah, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.
- 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

- III. 1 For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff: the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water. The mighty man, and the man of war: the judge, and the prophet, and the diviner, and the ancient. The captain of fifty, and the honourable man: and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the skilled enchanter. And I will give children to be their princes: and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler; and let this ruin be under thy hand: in that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer, for in my house is neither bread nor clothing: make me not a ruler of the people. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The show of their countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not: woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. O my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them: O my people, thy leaders misguide thee, and destroy the way of thy paths.
- 13 Jehovah riseth up to plead: and standeth to judge the people. 14 Jehovah will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard, 15 the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts.
- 16 Moreover Jehovah saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes: walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with

17 their feet ; therefore Jehovah will make bald the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will discover their shame.

18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their
19 anklets, and the nets, and the crescents ; the ear-drops, and
20 the bracelets, and the veils ; the head-bands, and the feet-chains,
21 and the girdles, and the scent-boxes, and the amulets ; the rings,
22 and the nose jewels, the holiday suits of apparel, and the
23 mantles, and the wimples, and the purses ; the mirrors, and the
24 fine linen, and the turbans, and the cloaks. And it shall come to pass, that instead of perfume there shall be stench ; and instead of a girdle a rope, and instead of well curled hair baldness ; and instead of a costly robe, a girding of sackcloth : and
25 branding instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword,
26 and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn : and she, being desolate, shall sit on the ground.

IV. 1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel : only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.
2 In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious : and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely
3 for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy ; even every one that is written among the
4 living in Jerusalem : when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment,
5 and by the spirit of burning. And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by
6 night : for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat : and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

V.

V. 1 Now will I sing of my Well-beloved, a song of my Beloved touching his vineyard : my Well-beloved hath a vineyard in a
2 very fruitful hill. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a wine-fat therein : and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild

- 3 grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah: judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.
- 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring
- 5 forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down
- 6 the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but it shall grow up to briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds
- 7 that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.
- 8 Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, and ye are left to dwell alone in the midst
- 9 of the earth! In mine ears saith the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitant. Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and
- 10 an homer of seed shall yield an ephah.
- 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink: that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and
- 12 pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither consider the operation of his hands.
- 13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their
- 14 multitude dried up with thirst. Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth therein, shall descend into it. And the mean man shall
- 15 be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled: and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled. But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment: and God that is holy shall be
- 16 sanctified in righteousness. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.
- 17
- 18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity; and sin as it were with a cart rope: that say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh, and come, that we may know it!
- 19
- 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil: that put

darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes: and prudent in their own sight!

22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine: and men of
23 strength to mingle strong drink. Which justify the wicked for reward: and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

24 Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and the flaming grass sinks down, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the
25 word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore is the anger of Jehovah kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them, and the hills did tremble, and their carcases were as the sweepings in the midst of the streets: for all this his anger is not turned away,
26 but his hand is stretched out still. And he hath lifted up an ensign to the nations from far, and hath hissed unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold they come right speedily.
27 None is faint nor stumbling among them, none doth slumber nor sleep: neither is the girdle of their loins loosed, nor the
28 latchet of their shoes broken. Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent: their horses' hoofs are counted like flint,
29 and their wheels like a whirlwind. Their roaring is like that of a lioness: they roar like young lions, and growl, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall
30 deliver it. And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened by the clouds thereof.

VI.

VI. 1 In the year that king Uzziah died, then I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up: and his train filled
2 the temple. About him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he
3 covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy! holy! holy! is Jehovah Lord of
4 hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the threshold trembled at the voice of him that cried;
5 and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me!

for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes
 6 have seen the King, Jehovah Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand: which he
 7 had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine
 8 iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go
 9 for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and say to this people: Hear ye indeed, but understand not;
 10 and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and
 11 understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be
 12 wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and Jehovah have removed men
 13 far away: and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. And though there be only a tenth part in it, even that shall
 be again consumed: yet as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose stocks remain to them, when they are felled, so the holy seed shall be the stock thereof.

VII.

VII. 1 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, with Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to take it, but he was not able to take it.
 2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim: and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.
 3 Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of
 4 the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field; and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.
 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken
 6 evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us: and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal;—
 7 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: it shall not stand, neither

8 shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and
the head of Damascus is Rezin: and within threescore and five
9 years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. And
the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is
Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be
established.

10 11 Moreover Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee
a sign of Jehovah thy God: ask it either in the depth or in the
12 height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I
13 tempt Jehovah. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David:
is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my
14 God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign:
Behold, a maiden shall conceive, and bear a son, and she shall
15 call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat:
when he knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good.
16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose
the good: the land whose two kings thou fearest shall be
desolate.

17 Jehovah shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and
upon thy father's house, days that have not come from the day
that Ephraim departed from Judah: even the king of Assyria.
18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall hiss
for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt,
19 and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. And they shall
come, and shall rest all of them in the craggy valleys, and in
the holes of the rocks, and upon all hedges, and upon all
20 pastures. In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor
that is hired from beyond the River, with the king of Assyria,
the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also cut off the
21 beard. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man
22 shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; and it shall come
to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall
eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left
23 in the land. And it shall come to pass in that day, that every
place where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silver-
24 lings: shall be for briers and thorns. With arrows and with
bows shall men come thither: because all the land shall become
25 briers and thorns. And on all hills that were digged with the
mattock, thou shalt not go thither for fear of briers and
thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for
the treading of sheep.

VIII. 1—IX. 7.

- VIII. 1 AND Jehovah said unto me, take thee a great tablet: and write on it, with a man's style, HASTE-PLUNDER—SPEED-SPOIL.
- 2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record: Uriah the
- 3 priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived, and bare a son; then said
- 4 Jehovah to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.
- 5 6 Then Jehovah spake unto me again, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly: and
- 7 rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks;
- 8 And he shall pass over into Judah, he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach to the neck: and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.
- 9 Associate yourselves, O ye peoples, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces, gird yourselves, and ye shall
- 10 be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought: speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us.
- 11 For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand: and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people,
- 12 saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, of every thing of which this people shall say, A confederacy: neither fear ye their fear, nor
- 13 be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself: and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary: but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of
- 14 offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall
- 15 stumble: and shall fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.
- 16 Bind up the testimony: seal the precept among my disciples.
- 17 And I will wait upon Jehovah, that hideth his face from the
- 18 house of Jacob: and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for tokens in Israel: from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in
- 19 mount Zion. And when they shall say unto you, seek unto

them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For
 20 the Living should they seek to the dead? To the precept and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is
 21 because there is no light in them. And they shall pass through the land hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they are hungry, they shall fret themselves, and
 22 shall curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth: and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven into the darkness.

IX. 1 Yet her dimness and anguish shall not be for ever, for as in the former time he hath brought low the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, so in the latter time he shall make her glorious: by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them
 3 hath the light shined. Thou has multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee as with the joy
 4 in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his task-master: as in the day of Midian.
 5 For all the warrior's armour with its clang, and his garments
 6 rolled in blood, shall be for burning and food for fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called
 7 of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice: from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

IX. 8—X. 4.

IX. 8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon
 9 Israel. And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria: that say in the pride and stoutness of
 10 heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them
 11 into cedars. And Jehovah shall set up the adversaries of Rezin

12 against him*: and join his enemies together. The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind, and they shall devour Israel with open mouth: for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

13 For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them: neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore Jehovah will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm tree and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head: and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people misguide them: and they that are led of them are destroyed. Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

18 For wickedness burneth as the fire, it shall devour the briers and thorns: and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall go up in volumes of smoke. Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land burned up: and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother. And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry, and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm: Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; and they together shall be against Judah: for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

X. 1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees; and to 2 the scribes that prescribe oppression; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people; that widows may be their prey, and that they may 3 rob the fatherless! And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your 4 glory? Without me, they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain: for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

X. 5—XII. 6.

5 Woe to the Assyrian! the rod of mine anger: and the staff 6 in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I

give him a charge: to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and
 7 to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he
 meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so: but it is in his
 8 heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith:
 9 Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carche-
 mish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus?
 10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the gods, whose graven
 images were more than those of Jerusalem and of Samaria:
 11 shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her gods, so do
 to Jerusalem and her idols?

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when Jehovah hath
 performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem:
 I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria,
 13 and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength
 of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am pru-
 dent: and I have removed the bounds of the nations, and have
 robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants
 14 like a valiant man. And my hand hath found as a nest the
 riches of the nations; and as one gathereth eggs that are left,
 have I gathered all the earth: and there was none that moved
 15 the wing, or opened the mouth, or chirped. Shall the axe boast
 itself against him that heweth therewith? Or shall the saw
 magnify itself against him that handleth it? As if the rod
 should wield him that lifteth it up, or as if the staff should lift
 16 up the man. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send
 among his fat ones leanness: and under his glory he shall
 17 kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire. And the Light of
 Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it
 shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day.
 18 And it shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful
 field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a sick
 19 man fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be
 few, that a child may write them down.

20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of
 Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no
 more again stay upon him that smote them: but shall stay
 21 upon Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant
 shall return, the remnant of Jacob: unto the mighty God.
 22 For though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea,
 only a remnant of them shall return: destruction is decreed,
 23 and shall flow forth in justice. For the Lord God of hosts hath
 made a decree of destruction, in the midst of all the land.

24 Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that

dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian : who shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the
25 manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while ; and the indig-
26 nation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction. And
the LORD of hosts shall raise up a scourge for him, as in the
slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb : and his rod shall be
upon the sea, and he shall lift it up after the manner of Egypt.
27 And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be
taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy
neck : and the yoke shall be broken from fatness.

28 He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron : at Mich-
29 mash he hath laid up his baggage. They have passed the Pass :
they have taken up their night-quarters at Geba ; Ramah is
30 afraid ; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter
of Gallim : cause it to be heard unto Laish, answer her Ana-
31 thoth. Madmenah is gone away : the inhabitants of Gebim
32 gather themselves to flee. He yet halteth at Nob that day :
he shakes his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion,
the hill of Jerusalem.

33 Behold the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth lop the top branch
with terror : and the high of stature are hewn down, and the
34 haughty humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the
forest with iron : and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

XI. 1 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stem of
2 Jesse : and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit
of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and under-
standing, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of know-
3 ledge and of the fear of Jehovah. And he shall delight in the fear
of Jehovah : and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,
4 neither decide after the hearing of his ears. But with righteous-
ness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the
meek of the earth : and he shall smite the earth with the rod of
his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the
5 wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and
6 faithfulness the girdle of his reins. And the wolf shall dwell
with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid :
and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a
7 little child shall lead them. And the cow and the she bear
shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together : and the
8 lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall
play on the hole of the asp : and the weaned child shall put his
9 hand on the den of the adder. They shall not hurt nor destroy
in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the

10 knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. And in
that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an
ensign to the peoples; to it shall the nations seek: and his
11 dwelling-place shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in
that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second
time to recover the remnant of his people: which shall be left,
from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush,
and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from
12 the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the
nations, and shall assemble the outcast sons of Israel: and shall
gather together the dispersed daughters of Judah, from the four
13 corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart,
and the hostile ones of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall
not envy Judah, and Judah shall not be hostile to Ephraim.
14 But they shall sweep down upon the shoulders of the Philistines
towards the sea, they shall spoil the children of the east
together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and
15 the children of Ammon shall obey them. And Jehovah shall
utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his
mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the River: and he
shall smite it into seven streams, and make men go over dry-
16 shod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his
people, which shall be left, from Assyria: like as it was to
Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

XII. 1 And in that day thou shalt say, O Jehovah, I will praise
thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned
2 away, and thou comfortest me. Behold, God is my salvation, I
will trust and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my
3 strength and my song, and he is become my salvation. There-
fore with joy shall ye draw water: out of the wells of salvation.
4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise Jehovah, call upon his
name, declare his doings among the nations: make mention that
5 his name is exalted. Sing unto Jehovah; for he hath done
6 excellent things: let this be known in all the earth. Cry out
and shout, thou inhabitress of Zion: for great is the Holy One
of Israel in the midst of thee.

XIII. 1—XIV. 27.

XIII. 1 THE BURDEN OF BABYLON WHICH ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ
DID SEE.

2 LIFT ye up a banner upon the bare mountain! Exalt thy voice
unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of

3 the nobles ! I have commanded my consecrated ones : I have
also called my mighty ones for mine anger, my proudly rejoic-
4 ing ones. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as
of a great people ; the noise of a tumult of kingdoms of nations
gathered together ! The Lord of hosts mustering the host of
5 battle ! They come from a far country, from the end of heaven :
Jehovah and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the
6 whole earth. Howl ye ; for the day of Jehovah is at hand :
7 it shall come as a mighty stroke from the Almighty. Therefore
shall all hands fall down : and every man's heart shall melt.
8 And they shall tremble ; pangs and throes shall take hold of
them ; they shall writhe as a woman that travaileth : they
shall be amazed, every one at another, their faces shall be faces
9 of flame. Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, terrible both
with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the earth desolate : and to
10 destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven,
and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light : the
sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall
11 not cause her light to shine. And I will visit upon the world
its evil, and upon the wicked their iniquity : and I will cause
the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the
12 haughtiness of the terrible. I will make men more precious
13 than fine gold : even man than the gold of Ophir. Therefore I
will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her
place : in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his
14 fierce anger. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as sheep
with none to gather them : they shall every man turn to his
15 own people, and flee every one into his own land. Every one
that is found shall be thrust through : and every one that is
16 taken shall fall by the sword. And their children shall be
dashed to pieces before their eyes : their houses shall be spoiled,
17 and their wives ravished. Behold I will stir up the Medes
against them : which regard not silver, and as for gold, they
18 delight not in it. And their bows shall dash the youths to
pieces : and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb,
19 their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of
kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency : shall be as
20 when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be
inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to gene-
ration : neither shall the Arab pitch tent there ; neither shall
21 the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the
desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of owls :
and the daughters of the ostrich shall dwell there, and satyrs

22 shall dance there. And hyenas shall cry in their palaces, and jackals in their pleasure houses : and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

XIV. 1 For Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and cause them to rest in their own land : and the strangers shall be joined with them, and shall cleave to the
2 house of Jacob. And the nations shall take them, and bring them to their place ; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and handmaids : and they shall take them captives whose captives they were ; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

3 And it shall come to pass, in the day that Jehovah shall give thee rest from thy labour, and from thy trouble ; and from the
4 hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve : that thou shalt take up this parable against the king of Babylon, and say ; How
5 hath the oppressor ceased ! the exactor of gold ceased ! Jehovah hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of the rulers ;
6 which struck the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke, which trod down the nations in anger, with a tread that
7 none hindered. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet : they
8 break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon : (saying,) now that thou art laid down,
9 no feller shall come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming : it stirreth up the giant-shades for thee, all the chief ones of the earth ; it hath raised
10 up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee : Art thou also become weak as
11 we ? art thou become like unto us ? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols : the worm is
12 spread under thee, and the earth-worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O bright star, son of the morning ! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the
13 nations ! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : and I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the
14 north : I will ascend above the heights of the clouds : I will be like the Most High. But thou shalt only be brought down to
15 hell : to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly
16 look upon thee, and consider thee : (saying,) Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms ?
17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof : that loosed not his prisoners homewards ? All the
18 kings of the nations, all of them ; lie in state, every one in his

- 19 own house : but thou art cast out of thy grave, like an abominable branch ; wrapped in those that are slain, that are thrust through with the sword : that go down to the stones of the pit, as
 20 a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evil doers shall be named no more for ever.
- 21 Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers: that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the
 22 face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts ; and will cut off from Babylon name, and remnant, and son, and son's son, saith Jehovah. I will
 23 also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water : and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.
- 24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying: Surely as I have thought so shall it come to pass ; and as I have purposed so
 25 shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their
 26 shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon
 27 all the nations. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And it is his hand that is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?
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XIV. 28.

XIV. 28 IN THE YEAR THAT KING AHAZ DIED WAS THIS BURDEN.

- 29 REJOICE not thou, whole Philistia, because the rod that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a
 30 basilisk, and his fruit shall be a flying serpent. And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay
 31 thy remnant. Howl, O gate ; cry, O city ; thou, whole Philistia, art dissolved: for there cometh from the north a
 32 smoke, and there is no straggler in his hosts. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nation? That Jehovah hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall take refuge in it.
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XV., XVI.

XV. 1

THE BURDEN OF MOAB.

VERILY in the night Ar-Moab is laid waste, is brought to silence! Verily in the night Kir-Moab is laid waste, is brought to silence! He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab doth howl over Nebo, and over Medeba; on all their heads baldness, and every beard cut off! In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their squares, every one doth wail, weeping abundantly. And Heshbon doth cry, and Elealeh; their voice is heard even unto Jahaz: even the armed soldiers of Moab cry out; his soul trembleth in him. My heart crieth out for Moab; his fugitives flee unto Zoar, like an heifer of three years old: for by the ascent of Luhith they go up with weeping; for in the way of Horonaim they raise a cry of despair. For the waters of Nimrim are desolate: for the grass is withered, the young grass faileth, there is no green thing. Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, do they carry away over the brook of the willows. For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the wailing thereof unto Eglaim, and the wailing thereof unto Beer-elim. For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood; for I will bring more woes upon Dimon: a lion upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

XVI. 1 Send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land, from Selah through the wilderness: unto the mount of the daughter of Zion. For it shall be, that, as a wandering bird cast out of the nest: so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon. Take counsel, execute judgment: make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; betray not the fugitive. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be established, and one shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David: judging, and seeking justice, and hasting righteousness. We have heard the pride of Moab, the very proud: his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath,—his lying boasts. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab, all of it shall howl: for the raisins of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn; surely they are stricken. For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the

lords of the nations break down the choice plants thereof, they reached unto Jazer, they strayed into the wilderness: her
 9 branches were stretched out, they went over the sea. Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer the vine of Sibmah; I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for the battle-shout is fallen on thy summer fruits and thy harvest.
 10 And gladness is taken away, and joy from the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their
 11 presses; I have made their shouting to cease. Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab: and mine inward
 12 parts for Kir-haresh. And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place: that he shall come to
 13 his sanctuary to pray; but he shall not prevail. This is the
 14 word that Jehovah spake concerning Moab of old. But now Jehovah hath spoken, saying, within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be put to shame, with all that great multitude: and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

 XVII., XVIII.

XVII. 1

THE BURDEN OF DAMASCUS.

BEHOLD Damascus is taken away from being a city: and it
 2 shall be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus: and the remnant of Syria shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin: and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean. And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm: and it shall be as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim. Yet gleanings shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree; two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith Jehovah God of Israel.
 7 At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall
 8 have respect to the Holy One of Israel. And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands: neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the images of Astarte, or

9 the pillars of the Sun. In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they leave because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.
 10 Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore thou shalt plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips:
 11 in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall fly away in the day of grief and desperate sorrow.

12 O the noise of many peoples, they make a noise like the noise of the seas: and the rush of nations, they rush like the rushing of
 13 of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; but He shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off: and they shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
 14 And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not: this is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

XVIII. 1 O land rustling with wings: which bordereth on the
 2 rivers of Ethiopia! That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in bulrush boats upon the waters!—Go back, ye swift messengers, to a nation tall and comely, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto: a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose
 3 land the rivers divide! All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth: see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.
 4 For so Jehovah said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will look on in my dwelling-place: like a clear heat upon herbage, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.
 5 For afore the harvest, when the bloom is finished, and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he shall cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.
 6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

7 In that time shall a present be brought unto the LORD of hosts, from a people tall and comely, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto: a nation that meteth out and treadeth down; whose land the rivers divide; to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

XIX.

XIX. 1

THE BURDEN OF EGYPT.

BEHOLD, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt are moved at his presence,
2 and the heart of Egypt doth melt within him. And I will set Egypt against Egypt, and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour: city against city,
3 and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof, and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to
4 them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord: and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the LORD
5 of hosts. And the waters shall fail from the sea: and the river
6 shall be wasted and dried up. And the rivers shall become putrid, and the canals of Egypt shall be emptied and dried up:
7 the reeds and flags shall wither. The meadows by the river, by the border of the river, and every thing sown by the river, shall
8 wither, be driven away, and be no more. The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the river shall lament:
9 and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. And they that work in combed flax shall be confounded: and they
10 that weave white cotton. And the pillars of the land shall be broken down: and all her labouring men shall be grieved in
11 heart. The princes of Zoan are utterly fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye
unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient
12 kings? Where are they? where are thy wise men? And let them tell thee now: and let them know what the LORD of hosts
13 hath purposed upon Egypt. The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived: they have also misled
14 Egypt, they that are the stay of the tribes thereof. Jehovah hath mingled a spirit of reeling in the midst thereof: and they have
caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man
15 staggereth in his vomit. Neither shall there be any work for Egypt: which the head or tail, branch or rush, may do.
16 In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid, and fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD
17 of hosts, which he shaketh over it. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention

thereof shall be afraid in himself: because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

18 In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the
language of Canaan, and swear to the LORD of hosts: one shall
19 be called, The city of destruction. In that day shall there be
an altar to Jehovah in the midst of the land of Egypt: and a
20 pillar at the border thereof to Jehovah. And it shall be for a
sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of
Egypt: for they shall cry unto Jehovah because of the oppres-
sors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and
21 he shall deliver them. And Jehovah shall be known to Egypt,
and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day: and shall
do sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow vows unto the LORD, and
22 perform it. And Jehovah shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and
heal it: and they shall return to Jehovah, and he shall be en-
treated of them, and shall heal them.

23 In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria,
and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian
into Assyria: and Egypt shall serve Jehovah with Assyria.

24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with
25 Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: whom the LORD
of hosts shall bless, saying: Blessed be Egypt my people, and
Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

XX.

XX. 1 In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon
the king of Assyria sent him, and fought against Ashdod, and took
2 it; at the same time spake Jehovah by Isaiah the son of Amoz,
saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put
off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and
barefoot.

3 And Jehovah said, like as my servant Isaiah hath walked
naked and barefoot, a three years sign and wonder upon Egypt
4 and upon Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the
Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and
old, naked and barefoot, even utterly stripped, to the shame of
5 Egypt. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia
6 their expectation, and of Egypt their glory. And the inhabi-
tants of this coast shall say in that day, Behold, such is our
expectation, whither we fled for help, to be delivered from the
king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

XXI.

XXI. 1 THE BURDEN OF THE DESERT OF THE SEA.

As whirlwinds in the south pass through ; so it cometh from
 2 the desert, from a terrible land ! A grievous vision is declared
 unto me : the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the
 spoiler spoileth ;—Go up, O Elam : besiege, O Media ; all the
 3 sighing thereof have I made to cease. Therefore are my loins
 filled with pain ; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs
 of a woman that travaileth : I writhe so that I cannot hear ; I
 4 shudder so that I cannot see. My heart panteth, fearfulness
 5 affrighteth me : the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear
 unto me. Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink :
 arise, ye princes, anoint the shield !

6 For thus hath the Lord said unto me : Go, set a watchman,
 7 let him declare what he seeth. And he saw cavalry, horse-
 8 men two and two, riders on asses, riders on camels : and he
 hearkened diligently with much heed. And he cried, A lion ! O
 Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the daytime,
 9 and I am set in my ward whole nights : and, behold, here come
 mounted men, horsemen two and two. And he spake again, and
 said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen ; and all the graven images of
 10 her gods he hath broken unto the ground. O my threshing,
 and the corn of my floor : that which I have heard of the LORD
 of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

11 *The Bur-* One calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night ?
 den of
 Dumah. 12 The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the
 night : if ye will inquire, inquire ye ; return, come again.

13 *The Bur-* In the thickets in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling
 den upon
 Arabia. 14 companies of Dedanim. The inhabitants of the land of Tema
 bring water to him that is thirsty, they come to meet the
 15 fugitive with bread. For they flee from the face of the swords,
 from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the
 grievousness of war.

16 For thus saith the Lord unto me : Within a year, according
 to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail ;
 17 and the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of
 the children of Kedar, shall become few : for Jehovah the God
 of Israel hath spoken it.

XXII.

XXII. 1 THE BURDEN OF THE VALLEY OF VISION.

1 WHAT aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the
 2 housetops? Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a
 joyous fortress? Thy slain men are not slain with the sword,
 3 nor dead in battle. All thy princes are fled together, they are
 bound by the archers: all that are found in thee are bound
 4 together, which have fled afar. Therefore say I, Look away
 from me: I will weep bitterly, labour not to comfort me,
 5 because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people. For it
 is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity,
 from the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision: of breaking
 6 down the walls, and of crying to the mountains. And Elam
 bears the quiver, with chariots, infantry, and horsemen: and Kir
 7 uncovereth the shield. And it hath come to pass, that thy
 choicest valleys are full of chariots: and the horsemen have set
 8 themselves in array at the gate. And the veil of Judah is torn
 away: and thou hast looked in this day to the armour of the
 9 house of the forest. Ye have seen also to the breaches of the
 city of David, that they are many: and ye have gathered
 10 together the waters of the lower pool. And ye have numbered
 the houses of Jerusalem: and the houses have ye broken down
 11 to fortify the wall. Ye have made also a reservoir between the
 Two Walls, for the water of the old pool: but ye have not
 looked unto Him who hath done this, neither had respect unto
 12 Him who purposed it long ago. And in this day doth the
 Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to
 13 baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold mirth and
 jollity, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking
 14 wine: Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die. And
 the LORD of hosts hath revealed himself in mine ears, Surely
 this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the
 Lord God of hosts.

15 Thus saith the Lord God of hosts: Go, get thee unto this
 16 treasurer, unto Shebna, which is over the house, and say, What
 hast thou here? and whom hast thou here? that thou hast
 hewed thee out a sepulchre here,—hewing him out a sepulchre
 17 on high! gravating an habitation for himself in a rock! Behold
 18 Jehovah will surely cast thee down, O man: and hold thee fast.
 He will roll thee together like a ball, and violently toss thee
 into a large country: there shalt thou die, and there shall go

the chariots of thy glory, thou shame of thy lord's house.
 19 And I will drive thee from thy station : and from thy state He
 20 shall pull thee down. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 21 that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiash : and I
 will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy
 girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand : and
 he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the
 22 house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay
 upon his shoulder : and he shall open, and none shall shut ;
 23 and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him
 as a nail in a sure place : and he shall be for a glorious throne
 24 to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the
 glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, every
 25 small vessel, from cups to flagons of every kind. In that day,
 saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail fastened in the sure place
 be removed : and it shall be cut down, and fall, and the burden
 that was upon it shall be cut off ; for Jehovah hath spoken it.

 XXIII.

XXIII. 1

THE BURDEN OF TYRE.

Howl, ye ships of Tarshish ; for it is laid waste ! so that
 there is no house, no entering in : from the land of Chittim it
 2 is made known to them. Be silent, ye inhabitants of the Isle ;
 thou whom the merchants of Sidon, that pass over the sea,
 3 have replenished : and whose revenue is by great waters, the
 seed of the Nile, the harvest of the river ; and she is a mart of
 4 nations. Be thou ashamed, O Sidon : for the sea hath spoken,
 even the Stronghold of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring
 forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up
 5 virgins. As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be
 6 sorely pained at the report of Tyre. Pass ye over to Tarshish :
 7 howl, ye inhabitants of the Isle. Is this your joyous city,
 whose antiquity is of ancient days ? Her own feet shall carry
 8 her afar off to sojourn. Who hath taken this counsel against
 Tyre, the dispenser of crowns : whose merchants are princes,
 9 whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth ? The LORD
 of hosts hath purposed it : to stain the pride of all glory, and to
 bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth.
 10 Pass through thy land like the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish :
 11 thy bounds are no more. He hath stretched out his hand over
 the sea, he hath shaken the kingdoms : Jehovah hath given a
 commandment against Canaan, to destroy the strongholds

12 thereof. And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou dishonoured virgin, daughter of Sidon: arise, pass over to
 13 Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest. Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not, till the Assyrian founded it for them that dwell in the wilderness: they have set up their siege towers, they have wasted the palaces thereof; he hath
 14 made her a heap of ruins. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish: for your stronghold is laid waste.

15 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, like the days of one king: after the
 16 end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten: make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be re-
 17 membered. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that Jehovah will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire: and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the
 18 world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to Jehovah; it shall not be treasured nor laid up: for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before Jehovah, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

XXIV., XXV., XXVI., XXVII.

XXIV. 1 Behold Jehovah poureth the earth out, and maketh it empty: and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the
 2 inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress: as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the
 3 creditor, so with the debtor. The land shall be emptied, emptied out; and spoiled, spoiled utterly: for Jehovah hath spoken this
 4 word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away: the haughty people of the earth
 5 do languish. The land also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof: because they have transgressed the laws, changed the
 6 ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and
 7 few men left. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth:
 8 all the merry-hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth: the joy of the harp
 9 ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song: strong drink
 10 shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is

broken down : every house is shut up, that no man may come
 11 in. There is a crying for wine in the streets : all joy is
 12 darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left
 13 desolation : and the gate is smitten with ruin. For so it shall
 be in the midst of the land, among the peoples : as the shaking
 of an olive tree, as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is
 14 done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the
 15 majesty of Jehovah : they shall cry aloud from the sea. Where-
 fore glorify ye Jehovah in the land of the sunrise : the name of
 Jehovah God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

16 From the ends of the earth have we heard songs, even glory
 to the Righteous : but I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe
 unto me ! the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacher-
 ously ; yea the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.
 17 Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant
 18 of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth
 from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit ; and he that
 cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the
 snare : for the windows from on high are open, and the
 19 foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is broken,
 broken up : the earth is shattered, all shattered ; the earth
 20 doth quake, doth quake exceedingly. The earth doth reel, doth
 reel like a drunken man, and swayeth to and fro like a ham-
 mock : and her transgression is heavy upon her ; and she shall
 21 fall, and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 that Jehovah shall come to judge the host of the high ones that
 22 are on high : and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they
 shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the
 dungeon, and shall be shut up in the prison : and after many
 23 days shall they be visited. And the moon shall be con-
 founded, and the sun ashamed : when the LORD of hosts shall
 reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients
 gloriously.

XXV. 1 O Jehovah, thou art my God ; I will exalt thee, I will
 praise thy name ; for thou hast done wonderful things : thy coun-
 2 sels of old are faithfulness and truth. For thou hast made of a
 city an heap ; of a defenced city a ruin : a palace of strangers
 3 to be no city ; it shall never be built again. Therefore shall the
 strong people glorify thee : the city of the terrible nations shall
 4 fear thee. For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor, a
 stronghold to the needy in his distress : a refuge from the
 storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible
 5 ones is as a storm against the wall. Thou shalt bring down

the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place : as the heat with the shadow of a cloud, the song of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

6 And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees : of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.
7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all peoples : and the veil that is spread over all nations.
8 He will swallow up death in victory ; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces : and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth ; for Jehovah hath spoken it.

9 And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for him, and he will save us : this is Jehovah ; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.
10 For on this mountain shall the hand of Jehovah rest : and Moab shall be trodden down under him, as straw is trodden down in the water of the dunghill. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of it, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim : and He shall bring down their
11 pride, together with the skill of their hands. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

XXVI. 1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah : We have a strong city ; salvation doth God appoint for walls
2 and bulwarks. Open ye the gates : that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in
3 peace, in peace, whose mind is stayed on thee : because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in Jehovah for ever : for in the Lord
4 JEHOVAH is everlasting strength. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high ; the lofty city, he layeth it low : he layeth
5 it low, even to the ground ; he bringeth it even to the dust.
6 The foot shall tread it down : the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy. The way of the just is even : thou makest even
7 the path of the just. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah, have we waited for thee : the desire of our soul is to
8 thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night ; yea, with my spirit within
9 me do I seek thee early : for when thy judgments are in the
10 earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness : in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah.

11 Jehovah, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed at thy zeal for thy people; yea, the fire shall devour thine enemies.

12 Jehovah, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works for us.

13 O Jehovah our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

14 They are dead, they shall not live; they are shades, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and

15 made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O Jehovah, thou hast increased the nation; thou hast glorified thyself: thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.

16 Jehovah, in trouble have they visited thee: they poured out a

17 whispered prayer, when thy chastening was upon them. As a woman with child, when she draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs: so have we

18 been in thy sight, O Jehovah. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind: we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither are the

19 inhabitants of the world brought forth. Thy dead shall live, my dead bodies shall arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall bring forth the dead.

20 Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little

21 moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, Jehovah cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

XXVII. 1 In that day Jehovah with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the fleet serpent, and leviathan the coiled serpent: and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

2 In that day sing ye unto her; A vineyard of wine;—

3 I Jehovah do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any

4 hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is not in me: who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would

5 go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, let him make peace with me: let him

6 make peace with me. In the coming time Jacob shall take root: Israel shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

7 Hath He smitten him, as He smote those that smote him?

8 Is he slain with the slaughter of their slain? In measure, by
 sending her away, thou dost contend with her: He driveth her
 9 away by his rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this
 therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all
 its fruit:—to take away his sin, to break all the stones of the
 altar in pieces like chalkstones, and to raise up the images of
 10 Astarte, and of the Sun, no more. For the defenced city shall
 be desolate, the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness:
 there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and con-
 11 sume the branches thereof. When the boughs thereof are
 withered, they shall be broken off; the women come, and set
 them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding; therefore
 he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that
 formed them will show them no favour.

12 And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall
 gather in his fruit from the channel of the River unto the stream
 of Egypt: and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children
 13 of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great
 trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready
 to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land
 of Egypt: and they shall worship Jehovah in the holy mount
 at Jerusalem.

XXVIII., XXIX., XXX., XXXIV., XXXV.

XXVIII. 1 WOE to the crown of pride of the drunkards of
 Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty: which
 are on the head of the fat valley of them that are overcome with
 2 wine! Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which
 as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty
 waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.
 3 The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be
 4 trodden under feet: and the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
 which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the early
 fruit before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it
 seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory,
 and for a diadem of beauty; unto the residue of his people:
 6 and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment;
 and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.
 7 But they also have erred through wine, and through strong
 drink are out of the way: the priest and the prophet have
 erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine,

they are out of the way through strong drink ; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

‘ Whom will he teach knowledge ? and whom will he make to understand doctrine ? Them that are weaned from the milk, and taken from the breasts ? It is precept upon precept, precept upon precept ; line upon line, line upon line : here a little, and there a little.’ Yea, with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people, who said to them, This is the rest ; cause the weary to rest ; and this is the refreshing : but they would not hear. And the word of Jehovah is unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept ; line upon line, line upon line : here a little, there a little ; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

Wherefore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement ; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us : for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves :—

Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I have laid in Zion a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste. And I will set judgment for the line, and righteousness for the plummet : and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand : when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. And as often as it passeth through, it shall take you ; for morning by morning shall it pass through, by day and by night : and affliction alone will make you understand doctrine. For the bed is too short for a man to stretch himself on it : and the covering too narrow for a man to wrap himself in it. For Jehovah shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon : that he may do his work, his strange work ; and bring to pass his act, his strange act. Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong : for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole land.

Give ye ear, and hear my voice : hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the ploughman plough all day in order to sow ? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground ? When he hath

made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the dill, and scatter the cummin, and sow the wheat in rows, and the
 26 barley in the appointed place, and the rye in his border? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.
 27 For the dill is not threshed with the corn-sledge, neither is the cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the dill is
 28 beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Is bread corn crushed to pieces; for he doth not thresh it for ever? He drives his cart wheel and his horses; he doth not crush it to
 29 pieces. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

XXIX. 1 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! Add
 2 ye year to year; let the festivals go round. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be
 3 unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about: and I will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise
 4 forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the
 5 ground, and thy voice shall be like that of a spirit out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. Yet the
 multitude of thy foreign invaders shall become like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones as chaff that passeth away:
 6 yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great
 noise: with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.
 7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, shall be as a dream of a night vision: even all that fight
 8 against her and her bulwarks, and that distress her. It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth;
 but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite:
 so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

9 Waver, and wonder; blind yourselves, and be blind: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with
 10 strong drink. For Jehovah hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets
 11 and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a sealed book, which
 men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray
 12 thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray

13 thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord hath said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me; but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by
14 the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from Jehovah: and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who
16 seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? Or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no
17 understanding? Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field: and the fruitful field shall
18 be reckoned to the forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book: and the eyes of the blind shall see
19 out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in Jehovah: and the poor among men shall
20 rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner ceaseth; and all that watch
21 for iniquity are cut off: that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate; and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

22 Therefore thus saith Jehovah, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:—Jacob shall no more be ashamed,
23 neither shall his face any more wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name: and shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
24 and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding: and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

XXX. 1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith Jehovah, that take counsel, but not of me; and that weave a web, but not of my
2 spirit; that they may add sin to sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of
3 Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame,
4 and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion. When his
5 princes are at Zoan, and his ambassadors come to Hanes; they shall all be ashamed of a people that can not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

6 The burden of the beasts of the south ! Through a land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the fierce lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent : they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit
7 them. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose :
8 therefore have I called her the blusterer that sitteth still. Now go, write it before them on a table, and note it in a book : that
9 it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. For this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the
10 law of Jehovah : which say to the seers, See not ; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things : speak unto us
11 smooth things, prophecy deceits : get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from
12 before us. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and per-
13 verseness, and stay thereon : therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose
14 breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And it shall be broken as when an earthen pitcher is broken in pieces,—broken unsparingly : so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the well.

15 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel ; In returning and rest shall ye be saved ; in quietness and in
16 confidence shall be your strength : and ye would not. But ye said, No ; for we will flee upon horses ; therefore shall ye flee : and, We will ride upon the swift ; therefore shall they that
17 pursue you be swift. One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one ; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee : till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.
18 And therefore will Jehovah wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you : for Jehovah is a God of righteousness : blessed are all they that wait for him.

19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem : thou shalt weep no more ; he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice
20 of thy cry ; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner
21 any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers : and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to

22 the left. Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold : thou shalt cast them away as a loathsome thing ; thou shalt say
 23 unto it, Get thee hence. Then shall he give rain for thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal ; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous : in that
 24 day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. And the oxen and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat well-seasoned provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with
 25 the fan. And there shall be upon every lofty mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers, and streams of waters : in the day
 26 of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days : in the day that Jehovah bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

27 Behold, the name of Jehovah cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy : his lips are full of
 28 indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire. And his breath as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of perdition : and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the peoples, to lead them astray.
 29 Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept : and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of Jehovah, to the Rock of Israel.
 30 And Jehovah shall cause the majesty of his voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of anger and the flame of a devouring fire : with scatter-
 31 ing, and tempest, and hailstones. For through the voice of Jehovah shall the Assyrian be beaten down : he shall smite
 32 him with a rod. And every stroke of the staff of doom, which Jehovah shall lay upon him, shall be with tabrets and harps :
 33 and with blows of battle will he fight against him. For Tophet is ordained of old ; yea, for the king it is prepared ; he hath made it deep and large : the pile thereof is fire and much wood ; the breath of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

XXXI. 1 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help ; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many ; and in horsemen, because they are very strong : but they look not unto
 2 the Holy One of Israel, neither seek Jehovah ! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words : and he will rise up against the house of the evildoers, and against the

3 help of them that work iniquity. And the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit: and Jehovah shall stretch out his hand, and he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall perish together.

4 For thus hath Jehovah spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion growling over his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he is not afraid of their voice, nor abaseth himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for
5 the hill thereof. As birds hovering over their young, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem:—defend and deliver,
6 pass over and save. Return ye unto Him from whom ye have deeply revolted, O children of Israel. For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.
8 Then shall the Assyrian fall by the sword, not of a man; and the sword, not of a mortal, shall devour him: and he shall flee from the sword, and his young warriors shall be bondsmen.
9 And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensigns, saith Jehovah, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

XXXII. 1 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness: and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim: and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. And the heart of the reckless shall understand knowledge: and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no
6 more called noble, nor the churl said to be gentle. For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity: to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against Jehovah, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the
7 thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy claimeth his right. But the noble deviseth noble things: and by noble things doth he stand.

9 Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice: ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech. In a year and day shall ye be troubled, ye careless women: for the vintage faileth,
11 the gathering shall not come. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you

12 bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins. They shall beat on
 13 the breasts, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. Upon the
 land of my people shall come up thorns and briers : yea, upon all
 14 the houses of joy in the joyous city. For the palace shall be
 forsaken ; the crowd of the city shall be left : Ophel, and the
 watch-tower shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pas-
 15 ture of flocks : until the spirit be poured upon us from on high,
 and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field
 16 be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wil-
 17 derness : and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the
 work of righteousness shall be peace : and the effect of righteous-
 18 ness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell
 in a home of peace : and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting
 19 places. And it shall hail, to the downfall of the forest : and the
 20 city shall be low in a low place. Blessed are ye that sow beside
 all waters : that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.

XXXIII. 1 Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled ;
 and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with
 thee ! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled ;
 when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they
 shall deal treacherously with thee.

2 O Jehovah, be gracious unto us ; we wait for thee : be thou
 their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of
 3 trouble. At the noise of the tumult the peoples flee : at the
 4 lifting up of thyself the nations are scattered. And your spoil
 shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar : as the
 5 running to and fro of locusts shall they run upon it. Jehovah
 is exalted ; for he dwelleth on high : he hath filled Zion with
 6 judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall
 be the stability of thy times, and thy strength of salvation :
 the fear of Jehovah is his treasure.

7 Behold, their valiant ones cry without : the ambassadors of
 8 peace weep bitterly. The highways lie waste, the wayfaring
 man ceaseth : he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the
 9 cities, he regardeth no man. The land mourneth and lan-
 guisheth : Lebanon is ashamed and withereth away : Sharon is
 like a wilderness ; and Bashan and Carmel cast their leaves.
 10 Now will I rise, saith Jehovah : now will I be exalted ; now
 11 will I lift up myself. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring
 12 forth stubble : your breath, as fire, shall devour you. And the
 people shall be as the burnings of lime : as thorns cut up shall
 they be burned in the fire.

13 Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done : and, ye that are

14 near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid ;
 fearfulness had surprised the hypocrites : who among us can
 abide the devouring fire ? who among us can abide perpetual
 15 burnings ? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh up-
 rightly : he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh
 his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from
 16 hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil. He
 shall dwell in high places : his place of defence shall be the
 strongholds of rocks : bread shall be given him ; his waters shall
 17 be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty : they
 18 shall behold the land afar off. Thine heart shall meditate on
 the past terror. Where is he that counted ? where is he that
 weighed ? where is the receiver ? where is he that counted the
 19 towers ? Thou shalt see no more a fierce people, a people of
 deep speech that thou canst not hear ; of a barbarous tongue
 20 that thou canst not understand. Look upon Zion, the city of
 our solemnities : thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet home, a
 tent that shall not be taken down ; not one of the stakes thereof
 shall ever be pulled up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be
 21 broken. But there the glorious Jehovah will be unto us a
 place of broad rivers and streams : wherein shall go no galley
 22 with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For Jehovah
 is our judge, Jehovah is our lawgiver, Jehovah is our king : he
 23 will save us. Thy tacklings are loosed : they cannot hold the
 mast upright, they cannot spread the ensign : then is the prey of
 24 a great spoil divided : the lame take the prey. And the in-
 habitant shall not say, I am sick : the people that dwell therein
 shall be forgiven their iniquity.

XXXIV. 1 Come near, ye nations, to hear ; and hearken, ye
 peoples : let the earth hear, and all that is therein ; the world, and
 2 all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of Jehovah
 is upon all nations, and his wrath upon all their armies : he hath
 utterly doomed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.
 3 And their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their carcases
 shall go up : and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
 4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens
 shall be rolled together as a scroll : and all their host shall fall
 down, as the withered leaf falleth off from the vine, and as
 5 the blighted fruit from the fig tree. For my sword is drenched
 in heaven : behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon
 6 the people of my curse, for judgment. The sword of Jehovah
 is glutted with blood, it is gorged with fat, with the blood of
 lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams : for

Jehovah hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the
 7 land of Edom. And the buffaloes shall fall down with them,
 and the bullocks with the bulls : and their land shall be drenched
 8 with blood, and their dust made rich with fat. For it is the day
 of Jehovah's vengeance : and the year of recompences for the con-
 9 troversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into
 pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone : and the land thereof
 10 shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor
 day ; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever : from generation
 to generation it shall lie waste ; none shall pass through it for
 11 ever and ever. And it shall be an heritage for the pelican and
 the hedgehog ; the bittern also and the raven shall dwell in it :
 and He shall stretch out upon it the line of desolation, and the
 12 plummet of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to
 the kingdom, but none shall be there : and all her princes shall
 13 be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles
 and brambles in the fortresses thereof : and she shall be an
 habitation of wild dogs, and a court for the daughters of the
 14 ostrich. And the jackals shall meet with the wolves, and the
 satyr shall cry to his fellow : the night-spectre also shall dwell
 15 there, and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great
 owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her
 shadow : there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one
 16 with her mate. Seek ye out of the book of Jehovah, and read :
 no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate : for my
 mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered
 17 them. And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath
 divided it unto them by line : they shall possess it as an herit-
 age for ever. From generation to generation shall they dwell
 therein.

XXXV. 1 The wilderness and the parched land shall be glad for
 2 them : and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It
 shall blossom, it shall blossom and rejoice, yea, with joy and
 singing ; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excel-
 lency of Carmel and Sharon : they shall see the glory of Jehovah,
 the excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen ye the weak hands : and confirm the feeble knees.
 4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not :
 behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a
 5 recompence ; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the
 blind shall be opened : and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
 6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the
 dumb shall shout : for in the wilderness shall waters break out,

7 and streams in the desert. And the mirage shall become a pool,
and the thirsty⁵ land springs of water: in the habitation of
jackals, where each lay, shall be a place for reeds and rushes.
8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be
called the holy way; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it
shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not
9 err therein. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous
beast go up thereon; none shall be found there: but the
10 redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of Jehovah
shall return, and come to Zion with shouts, and everlasting
joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

XXXVI.

XXXVI. 1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king
Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all
2 the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of
Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, unto king
Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of
3 the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came
forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiab's son, which was over the
house, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah, Asaph's son, the
recorder.
4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus
saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this
5 wherein thou trustest? I say, vain words are thy counsel and
strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou re-
6 bellest against me? Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken
reed, on Egypt: whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand,
and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt, to all that trust in
7 him. But if thou say to me, We trust in Jehovah our God: is it
not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken
8 away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship
before this altar? Now therefore, I pray thee, engage with my
master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand
horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.
9 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the
least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for
10 chariots and for horsemen? And am I now come up without
Jehovah against this land to destroy it? Jehovah said unto
me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

11 Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh,
 Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in Syrian; for we under-
 stand it: and speak not to us in Jewish, in the ears of the
 12 people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my
 master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words?
 hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, only to
 die with you by famine and by thirst?

13 Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in
 Jewish, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the
 14 king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive
 15 you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah
 make you trust in Jehovah, saying, Jehovah will surely deliver
 us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of
 16 Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah; for thus saith the king of
 Assyria, Make peace with me, and come out to me: and eat ye
 every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye
 17 every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take
 you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine,
 18 a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade
 you, saying, Jehovah will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of
 the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of
 19 Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where
 are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria
 20 out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these
 lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that
 Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

21 But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for
 the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

22 Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiab, that was over the
 household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah, the son of
 Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and
 told him the words of Rabshakeh.

XXXVII. 1 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it,
 that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and
 2 went into the house of Jehovah. And he sent Eliakim, who was
 over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the elders of
 the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the
 3 son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This
 day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for
 the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to
 4 bring forth. It may be Jehovah thy God will hear the words of
 Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to
 reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which

Jehovah thy God hath heard : wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah
6 said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith
Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard,
wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed
7 me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a
rumour, and return to his own land ; and I will cause him to
fall by the sword in his own land.

8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria
warring against Libnah : for he had heard that he was departed
9 from Lachish. And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of
Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when
10 he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall
ye speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God,
in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not
11 be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast
heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroy-
12 ing them utterly ; and shalt thou be delivered ? Have the gods
of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed,
as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden
13 which were in Telassar ? Where is the king of Hamath, and the
king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena,
and Ivah ?

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the mes-
sengers, and read it : and Hezekiah went up unto the house of
15 Jehovah, and spread it before Jehovah. And Hezekiah prayed
16 unto Jehovah, saying, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that
dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou
alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth : thou hast made heaven
17 and earth. Incline thine ear, O Jehovah, and hear ; open thine
eyes, O Jehovah, and see : and hear all the words of Sen-
18 nacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. Of a
truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the
nations, and their countries, and have cast their gods into
19 the fire : for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands,
20 wood and stone : therefore they have destroyed them. Now
therefore, O Jehovah our God, save us from his hand, that all
the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD,
even thou only.

21 And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus
saith Jehovah God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me
22 against Sennacherib king of Assyria : this is the word which

Jehovah hath spoken concerning him : The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn ; the
23 daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed ? And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high ?
24 even against the Holy One of Israel. By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon : and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof : and I will enter into
25 his farthest height, and into his garden-forest. I have digged, and drunk water ; and with the sole of my feet will I dry up all the rivers of Egypt.

26 Hast thou not heard that long ago I have done it ; that from the days of old I have prepared it ? Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest lay waste defenced cities into
27 ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded : they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the
28 housetops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and
29 thy rage against me. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

30 And this shall be a sign unto thee ; ye shall eat this year what groweth of itself ; and the second year that which springeth of the same : and in the third year sow ye, and reap,
31 and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root
32 downward, and bear fruit upward : for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion : the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

33 Thereforth thus saith Jehovah concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor
34 come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not
35 come into this city, saith Jehovah. For I will defend this city to save it : for my own sake and for my servant David's sake.

36 And the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp
37 of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand : and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria decamped, and departed,

38 and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he
 was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adram-
 39 melech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword ; and
 they escaped into the land of Armenia ; and Esar-haddon his
 son reigned in his stead.

XXXVIII.

XXXVIII. 1st In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.

And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and
 said unto him, Thus saith Jehovah, Set thine house in order :
 2 for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned
 3 his face toward the wall, and prayed unto Jehovah, and said,
 Remember now, Jehovah, I beseech thee, how I have walked
 before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done
 that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

4 Then came the word of Jehovah to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say
 5 to Hezekiah, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father,
 I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will
 6 add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and
 this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria : and I will de-
 7 fend this city. And this is a sign unto thee from Jehovah,
 that Jehovah will perform this word that he hath spoken ;
 8 Behold, I am causing the shadow to go back the degrees which
 it has gone down on the sun-dial of Ahaz, ten degrees back-
 ward. And the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it
 had gone down.

9 THE WRITING OF HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH, WHEN HE HAD
 BEEN SICK, AND WAS RECOVERED FROM HIS SICKNESS.

10 I said, I shall go to the gates of the grave in the midst of my
 11 days : I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall
 not see Jehovah, Jehovah in the land of the living : I shall
 12 behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. My
 generation is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's
 tent : I have rolled up like a weaver my life ; he will cut me off
 from the loom ; from day even to night wilt thou make an end
 13 of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he
 break all my bones : from day even to night wilt thou make an
 14 end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter ; I did
 mourn as a dove : mine eyes fail with looking upward ; O
 15 Jehovah, I am oppressed ; undertake for me. What shall I
 say ? He hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done
 it : I shall go softly all my years, for the bitterness of my

16 soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and
 17 make me to live. Behold, my bitterness, my bitterness, is turned to peace: and thou hast loved my soul from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy
 18 back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit can not hope for thy
 19 truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.
 20 Jehovah was ready to save me: and we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of Jehovah.

21 For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it
 22 for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of Jehovah?

XXXIX.

XXXIX. 1 At that time Merodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he
 2 had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.

3 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far
 4 country unto me, from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them.

5 And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of
 6 hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith Jehovah.
 7 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, Good is the word of Jehovah

which thou hast spoken. And he said, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

XL.

XL. 1 2 COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: that she hath received of the hand of Jehovah double for all her sins.

3 The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah in the wilderness: make straight in the desert a highway for our
4 God. Every valley shall be raised, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight,
5 and the rough places plain: and the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of
7 the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.
8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

9 Get thee up into a high mountain, O Zion, that bringest good tidings: lift up thy voice with strength, O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings: lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the
10 cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold the Lord Jehovah will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.
11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom: he shall gently lead the milch ewes.

12 Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure: and weighed the mountains in
13 scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the spirit of Jehovah: or being his counsellor hath taught him?
14 With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment: and taught him knowledge,
15 and showed him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop on a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as an
16 atom of dust. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn: nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

17 All nations before him are as nothing : and they are counted
 18 to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye
 19 liken God ? or what likeness will ye compare unto him ? The
 workman melteth an image : and the goldsmith spreadeth it over
 20 with gold, and casteth silver chains ! He that is too poor
 for a great oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot : he
 seeketh unto him a cunning workman, to prepare an image
 21 that will not shake ! Will ye not know ? will ye not hear ?
 hath it not been told you from the beginning ? have ye not
 22 understood from the foundations of the earth ? It is He that
 sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof
 are as grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a cur-
 23 tain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in : that
 bringeth the princes to nothing ; he maketh the judges of the earth
 24 as vanity. Yea, they are hardly planted ; yea, they are hardly
 sown ; yea, their stock hath hardly taken root in the earth : and
 he hath only breathed upon them, and they are withered, and
 25 the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. To whom then
 26 will ye liken me, or shall I be equal ? saith the Holy One. Lift
 up your eyes on high, and behold ! Who hath created these
 things ? He bringeth out their host by number : he calleth
 them all by name, by the greatness of his might, for that he is
 strong in power ; not one faileth.

27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and why speakest thou, O Israel,
 My way is hid from Jehovah, and my cause is passed over
 28 by my God ? Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard ?
 Jehovah is an everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the
 earth : he fainteth not, neither is weary ; there is no searching
 29 of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint : and to
 30 them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the
 youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall
 31 utterly fall : but they that wait upon Jehovah shall renew
 their strength : they shall lift up their wings like eagles ; they
 shall run, and not be weary, they shall walk, and not faint.

XLI. 1 Keep silence before me, O islands ; and let the people re-
 new their strength : let them come near, then let them speak ;
 2 let us come near together to judgment. Who hath raised up
 one from the east, whom righteousness shall meet in his steps ?
 he shall give the nations before him, and make him tread upon
 kings ; he shall give them as the dust to his sword, and as
 3 driven stubble to his bow. He shall pursue them, he shall pass
 4 safely : by a way that he had not gone with his feet. Who
 hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the

beginning ? I Jehovah, the first, and with the last : I am He.

5 The isles have seen it, and feared, the ends of the earth tremble :
6 they have drawn near, and come. They help every one his
neighbour : and every one saith to his brother, Be of good
7 courage. And the carpenter has encouraged the goldsmith,
and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smiteth the
anvil : he saith of the sodering, it is good ; and he fasteneth
it with nails, that it shall not shake.

8 But thou, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen ;
9 the seed of Abraham my friend : thou whom I have taken
from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the borders
thereof ; and said unto thee, Thou art my servant, I have chosen
10 thee, and not cast thee away :—fear thou not, for I am with
thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God : I will strengthen
thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea I will uphold thee with the
11 right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were
incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded : they
shall be as nothing ; and they that strive with thee shall
12 perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even
them that contended with thee : they that war against thee
13 shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I Jehovah
thy God do hold thy right hand : saying unto thee, Fear not,
I will help thee.

14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel : I will
help thee, saith Jehovah, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of
15 Israel. Behold I will make of thee a new sharp threshing
instrument having teeth : thou shalt thresh the mountains, and
16 beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt
fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirl-
wind shall scatter them : and thou shalt rejoice in Jehovah, and
shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 The poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their
tongue faileth for thirst : I Jehovah will hear them, I the God of
18 Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on bare hills, and
fountains in the midst of the valleys : I will make the wilderness
19 a pool of water, and the dry lands springs of water. I will plant
in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, and the myrtle, and the
oil tree ; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane, and the
20 fir tree together : that they may see, and know, and consider,
and understand together, that the hand of Jehovah hath done
this ; and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

21 Produce your cause, saith Jehovah : bring forth your strong
22 reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and

show us, the things that shall happen: let them show the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

23 Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.

25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come; from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon the princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know? and beforetime, that we may say, It is right? Yea, there is none that showeth, yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that heareth your words. I am the first to say to Zion, Behold, behold them: and to give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings. For I looked, and there was no man, even among them, and there was no counsellor: that when 29 I asked of them could answer a word. Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.

XLII. 1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the nations. He shall not cry, nor lift up: nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: 4 he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

5 Thus saith God, Jehovah, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand; and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles: to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness 8 out of the prison house. I am Jehovah; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

10 Sing unto Jehovah a new song, and his praise from the end

of the earth : ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein ;
 11 the isles and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and
 the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth
 inhabit : let the inhabitants of the Rock sing, let them shout
 12 from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto
 13 Jehovah : and declare his praise in the islands. Jehovah shall
 go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up his zeal like a man
 of war : he shall shout, yea, roar ; he shall behave himself
 mightily against his enemies.

14 I have long time holden my peace ; I have been still, and re-
 frained myself : now will I cry like a travailing woman ; I will
 15 destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and
 hills, and dry up all their herbs : and I will make the rivers islands,
 16 and I will dry up the pools. And I will bring the blind by a
 way that they knew not ; I will lead them in paths that they
 have not known : I will make darkness light before them, and
 crooked things straight ; these things will I do with them, and
 17 not forsake them. They shall be turned back, they shall be
 greatly ashamed : that trust in graven images, that say to the
 molten images, Ye are our gods.

18 19 Hear, ye deaf : and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who
 is blind, but my servant ? or deaf, as my messenger whom I
 send ? Who is blind as he that is consecrated, and blind as the
 20 servant of Jehovah ? Seeing many things, but thou observest
 21 not : opening the ears, but he heareth not. Jehovah is well
 pleased for his righteousness sake : he will magnify the law, and
 22 make it honourable. But this is a people robbed and spoiled ;
 they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison
 houses : they are for a prey, and none delivereth ; for a spoil,
 23 and none saith, Restore. Who among you will give ear to this ?
 24 who will hearken and hear for the time to come ? Who gave
 Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers ? did not Jehovah ?
 —he against whom we have sinned ; for they would not walk
 25 in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. There-
 fore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the
 strength of battle : and it hath set him on fire round about, yet
 he knew not ; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

XLIII. 1 But now thus saith Jehovah that created thee, O Jacob,
 and he that formed thee, O Israel : Fear not, for I have redeemed
 2 thee ; I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine. When thou
 passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through
 the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest
 through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the

- 3 flame kindle upon thee. For I am Jehovah thy God, the Holy
one of Israel, thy Saviour: I have given Egypt for thy ransom,
4 Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my
sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: there-
5 fore I will give men for thee, and nations for thy life. Fear
not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east,
6 and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give
up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far,
7 and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one
that is called by my name: for I have created him for my
8 glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him. Bring forth
the blind people, that have eyes: and the deaf, that have ears.
9 Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples be
assembled; who among them can declare this, and show us
former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that
they may be justified; or let them hear, and say, It is truth.
10 Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I
have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and under-
stand that I am he: before me there was no God formed,
neither shall there be after me.
- 11 I, even I, am Jehovah: and beside me there is no saviour.
12 I have declared, and have saved, and have showed, and there
was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses,
13 saith Jehovah, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am
he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will
work, and who shall let it?
- 14 Thus saith Jehovah, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel;
for your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down
all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.
15 I am Jehovah, your Holy One: the Creator of Israel, your
King.
- 16 Thus saith Jehovah, which maketh a way in the sea; and
17 a path in the mighty waters: which bringeth forth the
chariot and horse, the army and the power; they shall lie
down together, they shall not rise; they are extinct, they are
18 quenched as tow. Remember ye not the former things: neither
19 consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now
it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make
20 a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast
of the field shall honour me, the wolves and the ostriches:
because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the
21 desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people
have I formed for myself: they shall show forth my praise.

22 But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob : but thou hast been
 23 weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle
 of thy burnt offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy
 sacrifices : I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor
 24 wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet
 cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy
 sacrifices : but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou
 25 hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am he that
 blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake : and I will
 26 not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance ; let us plead
 27 together : declare thou, that thou mayest be justified. Thy
 first father hath sinned : and thy teachers have transgressed
 28 against me. And I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary :
 and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

XLIV. 1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant : and Israel whom
 2 I have chosen. Thus saith Jehovah that made thee, and that
 formed thee from the womb, which will help thee : Fear not,
 O Jacob, my servant ; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.
 3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon
 the dry ground : I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and
 4 my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up
 5 among the grass : as willows by the water courses. One shall
 say, I am Jehovah's ; and another shall call himself by the
 name of Jacob : and another shall subscribe with his hand unto
 Jehovah, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

6 Thus saith Jehovah the King of Israel, and his redeemer the
 LORD of hosts : I am the first, and I am the last ; and beside
 7 me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare
 it, and set it in order for me, since I founded the ancient
 people ? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let
 8 them show unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid ; have
 not I told thee from that time, and have declared it ? and ye
 are my witnesses : is there a God beside me ? yea, there is
 9 no Rock ; I know not any. They that make a graven image
 are all of them vanity ; and their delectable things shall not
 profit : and their witnesses see not, nor know ; that they
 10 may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten an
 11 image : that is profitable for nothing ? Behold, all his fellows
 shall be ashamed ; and the workmen, they are of men : let
 them all be gathered together, let them stand up ; yet they
 12 shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith
 with the tongs worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with ham-
 mers : and he worketh it with the strength of his arms, yea, he

is hungry, and his strength faileth ; he drinketh no water, and
13 is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule ; he marketh it
out with a line ; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out
with the compass : and he maketh it after the figure of a man,
according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the
14 house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress
and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the
trees of the forest : he planteth an ash, and the rain doth
15 nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn ; for he will
take thereof, and warm himself ; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh
bread : yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it ; he maketh it
16 a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part
thereof in the fire ; with part thereof he heateth flesh ; he
roasteth roast, and is satisfied : yea, he warmeth himself, and
17 saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue
thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image : he falleth
down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and
18 saith, Deliver me ; for thou art my god. They have not
known, nor understood : for he hath shut their eyes that
they cannot see ; and their hearts that they cannot under-
19 stand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there
knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of
it in the fire ; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals
thereof ; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it : and shall I make
the residue thereof an abomination ? shall I fall down to the
20 stock of a tree ? He feedeth on ashes ; a deceived heart hath
turned him aside : and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is
there not a lie in my right hand ?

21 Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel ; for thou art my
servant : I have formed thee ; thou art my servant ; O Israel,
22 thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a
thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins :
23 return unto me ; for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye
heavens, for Jehovah hath done it ; shout, ye depths of
the earth, break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest,
and every tree therein : for Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob,
24 and gloried himself in Israel. Thus saith Jehovah, thy
redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am
Jehovah that maketh all things ; that stretcheth forth the
heavens alone ; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself :
25 that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners
mad ; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their
26 knowledge foolish : that confirmeth the word of his servant,

and performeth the counsel of his messengers ; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited ; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof :
 27 that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up the rivers :
 28 that saith to Coresh, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure : even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built ; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

XLV. 1 Thus saith Jehovah to his anointed, to Coresh, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings : to open before him the two-leaved
 2 gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight : I will break in pieces
 3 the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places : that thou mayest know that it is I, Jehovah,
 4 which call thee by thy name, even the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect : therefore, I will call thee by thy name ; I will surname thee, though thou
 5 hast not known me. I am Jehovah, and there is none else, there is no God beside me ; I will gird thee, though thou hast
 6 not known me : that they may know, from the rising of the sun to his going down, that there is none beside me ; I am Jehovah,
 7 and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness ; I make peace, and create evil : I, Jehovah, do all these things.
 8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness : let the earth open, and let salvation and righteousness spring up, let her bring them forth together ; I
 9 Jehovah have created it. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker !—a potsherd of the potsherds of the earth ! Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ? or thy
 10 work, He hath no hands ? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begetteth thou ? or to the woman, What dost thou bring forth ?

11 Thus saith Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker : Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning
 12 the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it : I, even my hands, have stretched out
 13 the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways : he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.

14 Thus saith Jehovah, the labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over

unto thee, and they shall be thine ; they shall come after thee, in chains they shall come over : and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God
 15 is in thee, and there is none else, there is no God. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself: O God of Israel, the Saviour.
 16 They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go into confusion together that are makers of idols. But
 17 Israel shall be saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.
 18 For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am
 19 Jehovah; and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I Jehovah speak righteousness, I declare
 20 things that are right. Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image,
 21 and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near: yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it of old? have not I
 Jehovah? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and
 22 a saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is
 23 none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return: that unto me
 24 every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Only in Jehovah have I righteousness and strength, shall he say: unto him shall they come, and all that are incensed against
 25 him shall be ashamed. In Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

XLVI. 1 Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols are laid upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: these, which you carried in processions, are packed up, a burden to the weary beast.
 2 They stoop, they bow down together: they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.
 3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel; which are borne by me from the womb,
 4 which are carried from the birth: and to your old age I am he, and to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear, and I will carry, and will deliver you.
 5 To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal: and compare
 6 me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and

weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith ; and he maketh
 7 it a god : they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him
 upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and
 he standeth ; from his place shall he not remove : yea, one shall
 cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his
 trouble.

8 Remember this, and show yourselves men : bring it again to
 9 mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old :
 for I am God, and there is none else ; I am God, and there is
 10 none like me : declaring the end from the beginning, and from
 ancient times the things that are not yet done ; saying, My
 11 counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure : calling a
 ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel
 from a far country : yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to
 12 pass ; I have purposed it, I will also do it. Hearken unto me,
 13 ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness : I bring near
 my righteousness. It shall not be far off, and my salvation shall
 not tarry : and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my
 glory.

XLVII. 1 Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of
 Babylon, sit on the ground ; there is no throne, O daughter of the
 Chaldeans : for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

2 Take the millstones, and grind meal : uncover thy locks, lift up
 3 thy skirt, make bare the leg, pass over the rivers. Thy naked-
 ness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen : I will
 take vengeance, and I will spare no man.

4 As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name : the Holy
 5 One of Israel. Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O
 daughter of the Chaldeans : for thou shalt no more be called,
 6 The lady of kingdoms. I was wroth with my people, I have
 polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand :
 thou didst show them no mercy ; upon the ancient hast thou
 7 very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady
 for ever : so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart,
 neither didst remember the latter end of it.

8 Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that
 dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none
 else beside me ; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know
 9 the loss of children : but these two things shall come to thee in
 a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood : they
 shall come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of thy
 sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.
 10 For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness ; thou hast said, None

seeth me ; thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee : and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else
11 beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee ; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth : and mischief shall fall upon thee ; thou shalt not be able to put it off : and a desolation shall
12 come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know. Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitudes of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth : if so be
13 thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels : let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and
14 save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble ; the fire shall burn them ; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame : there shall
15 not be a coal to warm it, nor fire to sit before it. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured : and they which have trafficked with thee from thy youth, they shall wander every one to his quarter ; none shall save thee.

XLVIII. 1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah : which swear by the name of Jehovah, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.
2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel : the LORD of hosts is his name.
3 I have declared the former things from the beginning ; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them : I did
4 them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow
5 brass ; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee ; before it came to pass I showed it thee : lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image,
6 hath commanded them. Thou hast heard,—see all this ; and will not ye declare it ? I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.
7 They are created now, and not from the beginning ; and before to-day thou heardest them not ; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I
8 knew them. Yea, thou heardest not : yea, thou knewest not ; yea, of old thine ear was not opened : for I knew thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a rebel from the womb. For
9 my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will
10 I refrain for thee : that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver ; I have chosen thee in the furnace of
11 affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do

it; for how should my name be polluted? And I will not give my glory unto another.

12 Harken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called: I am he;
 13 I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the
 foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the
 14 heavens: I call unto them, and they stand up together. All ye,
 assemble yourselves, and hear; which among them hath declared
 these things? Jehovah hath loved him; he will do his pleasure
 15 on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans. I, even I,
 have spoken; yea, I have called him: I have brought him, and
 16 he hath prospered in his way. Come ye near unto me, hear ye
 this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the
 time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord Jehovah and
 17 his spirit hath sent me. Thus saith Jehovah, thy redeemer,
 the Holy One of Israel: I am Jehovah thy God, which teacheth
 thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest
 18 go. O that thou wouldest hearken to my commandments! then
 should thy peace be as a river, and thy righteousness as the
 19 waves of the sea. Thy seed also should be as the sand, and the
 offspring of thy body like the gravel thereof: his name should
 not be cut off, nor destroyed from before me.

20 Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a
 voice of shouting; declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of
 the earth: say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed his servant Jacob.
 21 And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts;
 he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave
 22 the rock also, and the waters gushed out. There is no peace,
 saith Jehovah, unto the wicked.

XLIX. 1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye nations, from
 far: Jehovah hath called me from the womb; since my mother
 2 conceived me hath he made mention of my name. And he hath
 made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand
 hath he hid me: and he made me a polished shaft, in his quiver
 3 hath he hid me. And he said unto me, Thou art my servant, O
 4 Israel, in whom I will be glorified. And I said, I have laboured
 in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain:
 yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my work with
 my God.

5 And now, saith Jehovah, that formed me from the womb to
 be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and to gather
 Israel unto him: yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah,
 6 and my God shall be my strength. And he saith, It is a light
 thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes

of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

- 7 Thus saith Jehovah, the redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One ; to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship : because of Jehovah that is faithful,
- 8 the Holy One of Israel, who shall choose thee. Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee ; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to
- 9 cause to inherit the desolate heritages ; to say to the prisoners, Go forth ; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves : they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be on all
- 10 bare hills. They shall not hunger nor thirst ; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them : for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.
- 11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways
- 12 shall be cast up. Behold, these shall come from far : and, lo, these from the north and from the west ; and these from the
- 13 land of Sinim. Shout, O heavens ; and be joyful, O earth ; and break forth into shouting, O mountains : for Jehovah hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.
- 14 But Zion saith, Jehovah hath forsaken me : and my Lord hath
- 15 forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? yea,
- 16 they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands : thy walls are con-
- 17 tinually before me. Thy children shall make haste : thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.
- 18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold ; all of these gather themselves together, and come to thee : as I live, saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with
- 19 an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. For thy wastes, and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow for the inhabitants,
- 20 and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The sons of thee that wast childless, shall say again in thine ears : The place is too strait for me ; make room for me that I may
- 21 dwell. Then shalt thou say in thy heart, Who hath borne me these, seeing I was childless and barren ; a captive, and removed to and fro, and who hath brought up these ? Behold, I was left alone ; these, where had they been ?

22 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, behold I will lift up my hand
to the nations, and set up my standard to the peoples: and they
shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be
23 carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing
fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow
down to thee with their face toward to the earth, and lick the
dust of thy feet: and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah, for
they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty: or the lawful
25 captive delivered? But thus saith Jehovah, Even the captives of
the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible
shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that con-
26 tendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will
feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they
shall be drunken with their own blood, as with new wine: and
all flesh shall know that I Jehovah am thy saviour, and thy
redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob.

L. 1 Thus saith Jehovah, Where is the bill of your mother's
divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors
is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have
ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother
2 put away. Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?
when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand
shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power
to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the
rivers a wilderness: their fish rotteth, because there is no water,
3 and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness: and
I make sackcloth their covering.

4 The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the learned,
that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that
is weary: he wakeneth me morning by morning, he wakeneth
5 mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord Jehovah hath opened
mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.
6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that
plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.
7 For the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore shall I not be
confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know
8 that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who
will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine
9 adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord
Jehovah will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?
10, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat
them up.

10 Who is among you that feareth Jehovah, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of Jehovah, and stay upon
11 his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; this shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

L.I. 1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek Jehovah: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to
2 the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him
3 alone, and I blessed him, and increased him. For Jehovah shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah: joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall go forth from me, and I will establish
5 my judgment for a light of the nations. My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth; and mine arms shall judge the nations: the isles shall wait upon me, and in mine arm shall they trust. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

7 Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproach of men,
8 neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

9 Awake! awake! put on strength, O arm of Jehovah; awake! as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hewed Rahab in pieces, that wounded the dragon?
10 Art thou not it which dried the sea, the waters of the great deep: that made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass
11 over? Therefore the redeemed of Jehovah shall return, and come with shouting unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; sorrow and
12 mourning shall flee away. I, even I, am he that comforteth you; who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass:

13 and forgettest Jehovah thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as he maketh ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor? The prisoner shall soon be loosed: and he shall not die in the dungeon, and his bread shall not fail. For I am Jehovah thy God, that stirreth up the sea, and its waves roar: the LORD of hosts is his name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand: that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

17 Awake! awake! stand up, O Jerusalem, which has drunk at the hand of Jehovah the cup of his wrath: thou hast drunken the goblet cup of trembling, and wrung it out. There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth: neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up. These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine and the sword; by whom shall I comfort thee? Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the wrath of Jehovah, the rebuke of thy God.

21 Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: thus saith thy Lord Jehovah, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling: the goblet cup of my wrath, thou shalt no more drink it again. But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

LII. 1 Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

3 For thus saith Jehovah, Ye have sold yourselves for nought: and ye shall be redeemed without money. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there: and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. 5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith Jehovah, that my people is taken away for nought? their oppressors exult, saith Jehovah; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

■ Therefore my people shall know my name : therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak ; behold, it is I.

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation : that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. The voice of thy watchmen ! they lift up
8 the voice ; together do they shout : for they see eye to eye, how Jehovah doth bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, shout
9 together, ye waste places of Jerusalem : for Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Jehovah hath
10 made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations : and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart
11 ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing : go ye out of the midst of her ; be ye clean, ye that bear the
12 vessels of Jehovah. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight : for Jehovah will go before you ; and the God of Israel will be your rereward.

13 Behold, my servant shall deal wisely : he shall be exalted and
14 extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee ; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form
15 more than the sons of men : so shall he sprinkle many nations ; kings shall shut their mouths before him : for that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

LIII. 1 Who hath believed our report ? And to whom is the arm
2 of Jehovah revealed ? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground : he hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no
3 beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we
4 esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God,
5 and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was
6 upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own
7 way : and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ; as a lamb that is brought to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb : so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment ; and who shall

declare his generation ? for he was cut off out of the land of the living ; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death : although he had done no violence, neither was any
10 deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and
11 the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied : by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many ; for he
12 shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors : and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

LIV. 1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear ; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child : for more are the children of the desolate than the children of
2 the married wife, saith Jehovah. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy dwellings ;
3 spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes ; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left : and thy seed shall inherit the nations, and shall people the desolate
4 cities. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed ; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame : for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the
5 reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband ; the LORD of hosts is his name : and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel ; the God of the whole earth shall he be
6 called. For Jehovah hath called thee, as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit : and as a wife of youth, who was put away,
7 saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee : but
8 with great mercies will I gather thee. In a gush of wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee : saith Jehovah thy
9 redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me ; when I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth : so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, and
10 that I will not rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed : but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, said Jehovah that hath mercy on thee.

11 O thou afflicted, tempest-tossed, uncomforted ; behold I will

lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires: and I will make thy battlements of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of precious stones. And all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah: and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from destruction, for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whoso gathereth together against thee shall fall away to thy side. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the fire of coal, and bringeth forth a weapon for his work: and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn: this is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness is of me, saith Jehovah.

LV. 1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken, hearken unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples: a leader and commander to the peoples. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee: because of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy one of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

6 Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found: call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts: neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud; that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void: but it shall accomplish that

which I please, and it shall prosper in that whereto I sent it.

- 12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the
mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into shout-
13 ing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead
of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the briar
shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to Jehovah for a
name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

LVI. 1 Thus saith Jehovah, keep ye justice, and do righteousness: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to
2 be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of
man that layeth hold on it: that keepeth the sabbath from pro-
3 faning it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. And let
not the son of the stranger that hath joined himself to Jehovah,
speak, saying, Jehovah utterly separateth me from his people:
neither let the eunuch say, Behold I am a dry tree.

4 For thus saith Jehovah unto the eunuchs that shall keep my
sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of
5 my covenant: even unto them will I give in mine house, and
within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of
daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not
be cut off.

6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to Jehovah,
to serve him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his ser-
vants; every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it,
7 and taketh hold of my covenant: even them will I bring to my
holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon
mine altar: for mine house shall be called an house of prayer
8 for all peoples. This is the word of the Lord Jehovah, which
gathereth the outcasts of Israel:—Yet will I gather others to
him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

9 All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts
10 in the forest. His watchmen are blind, they are all without
knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark: dream-
11 ing, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs,
which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that can-
not understand: they are all turned to their own way, every
12 one for his gain, one and all of them. Come ye, say they, I
will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink:
and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

LVII. 1 The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart:
and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righ-
2 teous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into

peace; they shall rest in their beds: each one that walked in his
3 uprightness. But ye, draw near hither, ye sons of the sorceress:
4 the seed of the adulterer and the harlot. Against whom do ye
sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and
put out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a
5 seed of falsehood: enflaming yourselves with idols under every
green tree; slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of
the rocks? Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy
portion; they, they are thy lot: even to them hast thou poured
a drink offering, thou hast offered a meat offering. Should I be
7 satisfied with these things? Upon a lofty and high mountain
hast thou set thy bed: even thither wentest thou up to offer
8 sacrifice. And behind the door and the door-post hast thou set
thy remembrance: for thou hast discovered thyself to another
9 than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and
made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed, where
10 thou sawest it. And thou wentest to the king with oil, and didst
multiply thy perfumes: and didst send thy messengers far off, and
11 didst debase thyself even unto hell. Thou art wearied in the
greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope:
thou hast yet found life in thine hand; therefore thou wast not
12 disheartened. And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared,
that thou hast lied, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to
thy heart? have I not held my peace, and even of old, and thou
13 fearest me not? I will declare thy righteousness: but thy works,
they shall not avail thee. When thou criest, let thy com-
14 panies of idols deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all
away; a breath shall take them off: but he that putteth his
trust in me shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy
15 mountain. And he shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare
the way: take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my
people.

16 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth
eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy
place: with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,
to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart
17 of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither
will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me,
and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his
covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was
18 wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I
have seen his ways, and will heal him: and I will lead him,
19 and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners. I create

the fruit of the lips : Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to
 20 him that is near, saith Jehovah ; and I will heal him. But the
 wicked are like the troubled sea : for it cannot rest, and its
 waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

LVIII. 1 Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet :
 and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob
 2 their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my
 ways, as a nation that has done righteousness, and has not
 forsaken the ordinance of their God : they ask of me the ordi-
 nances of justice ; they take delight in approaching to God.
 3 Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not ? wherefore
 have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge ?
 Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all
 4 your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to
 smite with the fist of wickedness : ye shall not fast as ye do
 5 this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a
 fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul ?
 is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sack-
 cloth and ashes under him ? wilt thou call this a fast, and an
 6 acceptable day to Jehovah ? Is not this the fast that I have
 chosen ? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the knots
 of the yoke : and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break
 7 every yoke ? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and
 that thou bring the wandering poor to thy house ? when thou
 seest the naked, that thou cover him ; and that thou hide not
 thyself from thine own flesh ?

8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine
 health shall spring forth speedily : and thy righteousness shall
 go before thee ; the glory of Jehovah shall be thy rereward.
 9 Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah shall answer ; thou shalt cry,
 and he shall say, Here I am : if thou take away from the midst
 of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking
 10 vanity. And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and
 satisfy the afflicted soul : then shall thy light rise in the dark-
 11 ness, and thy thick darkness be as the noon day. And Jehovah
 shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought,
 and make strong thy bones : and thou shalt be like a watered
 garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters shall not fail.
 12 And they that come of thee shall build the old waste places ;
 thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations : and
 thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of
 13 paths to dwell in. If thou wilt turn away thy foot from the

sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day: and wilt call the sabbath a delight, the holy of Jehovah, honourable; and wilt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding
 14 thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.

LIX. 1 Behold the hand of Jehovah is not shortened, that it
 2 cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your
 3 sins have hid his face from you, that he doth not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity: your lips have spoken lies, your tongue doth mutter
 4 perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth in truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth,
 6 and the crushed egg breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of
 7 violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts
 8 of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no justice in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth
 9 therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold darkness; for brightness, but we walk in thick darkness.
 10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in
 11 desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for
 12 salvation, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and our iniquities, we know them:—
 13 in transgressing and lying against Jehovah, and turning away backward from our God; speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And
 14 judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.
 15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and Jehovah saw it, and it displeased him that
 16 there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man,

and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his own arm hath brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustaineth him. And he hath put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head: and he hath put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and is clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, wrath to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies: to the islands he will repay recompence. And they shall fear the name of Jehovah from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun: when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of Jehovah shall lift up a standard against him. And a redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob: saith Jehovah. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah; my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth, and for ever.

LX. 1 Arise! be light! for thy light is come: and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. 2 And the nations shall come to thy light: and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be carried upon the arm. Then thou shalt see and brighten up, and thine heart shall throb and swell: because the abundance of the sea shall be turned in upon thee, the forces of the nations shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah: all they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of Jehovah with joy. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered for thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory. Who are these that fly as a cloud: and as doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them: unto the name of Jehovah thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of the stranger shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy unto thee. And thy gates shall be open con-

tinually; they shall not be shut day nor night: to bring unto thee
12 the forces of the nations, and their kings led in triumph. For
the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish:
13 yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the cypress, the pine tree, and the box together: to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will
14 make the place of my feet glorious. And the sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow down to the soles of thy feet: and they shall call thee, The city of Jehovah, The Zion of the Holy One
15 of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. And thou shalt suck the milk of the nations, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I Jehovah am thy saviour and thy redeemer,
17 the mighty one of Jacob. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: and I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt
19 call thy walls, Salvation, and thy gates, Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but Jehovah shall be unto thee an
20 everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for Jehovah shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy
21 mourning shall be ended. And thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever: the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I Jehovah will hasten it in his time.

LXI. 1 The spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound: to proclaim a year of grace for Jehovah, and a day of vengeance for our God; to comfort all that mourn:
2 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them a diadem for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: and they shall be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he might
4 be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations: and they shall repair the

5 waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks : and the sons of the alien shall be
 6 your ploughmen and your vine-dressers. And ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah ; men shall call you the ministers of our God : ye shall eat the riches of the nations, and in their glory
 7 shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double ; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion : therefore in their land shall they possess the double ; ever-
 8 lasting joy shall be unto them. For I Jehovah, love justice, I hate robbery and wrong : and I will give their hire truly, and
 9 I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples : all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed.

10 I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness : as a bridegroom putteth on a priestly crown, and as a bride
 11 adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth its plant to spring forth ; so the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

LXII. 1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest : until the righteousness thereof go forth as a shining light, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that
 2 burneth. And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory : and thou shalt be called by a new name,
 3 which the mouth of Jehovah shall name. And thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in
 4 the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be called, Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be called, Desolate ; but thou shalt be named, My own Delight, and thy land, the Married One : for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land
 5 shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee : and as the bridegroom rejoiceth
 6 over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night ; ye remembrancers of Jehovah, keep
 7 not silence : and give ye him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Jehovah hath sworn by
 8 his right hand, and by the arm of his strength : Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies, and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou

9 hast laboured. But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise Jehovah: and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.

10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people: cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones;
 11 lift up a standard for the peoples. Behold, Jehovah hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh: behold, his reward is with
 12 him, and his recompence before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of Jehovah: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

LXIII. 1 Who is this that cometh from Edom? with purple garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? 'I that speak in
 2 righteousness, mighty to save.' Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel: and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?
 3 'I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the nations there was none with me; and I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my fury: and their blood was sprinkled upon my garments,
 4 and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance
 5 is in mine heart: and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, but there was none to help; and I wondered, but there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation
 6 unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I trod down the nations in mine anger, and made them drunk in my fury: and I made their blood to run down to the earth.'

7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of Jehovah, and the praises of Jehovah, according to all that Jehovah hath bestowed on us: and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.
 8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not
 9 lie: so he was their saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all
 10 the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, he fought against
 11 them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people: saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his
 12 holy spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm: dividing the water before them, to make him an everlasting name? That led them through the

14 deep: as an horse in the plain they did not stumble? As cattle
that go down into the valley, the spirit of Jehovah made them
to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a
15 glorious name. Look down from heaven, and behold from the
habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where are thy zeal
and thy mighty deeds, the yearning of thy heart and thy mercies
16 toward me? are they restrained? For Thou art our father,
though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us
not: thou, O Jehovah, art our father; our redeemer is thy name
17 from everlasting. O Jehovah, why dost thou make us to wander
from thy ways, and hardenest our hearts from thy fear? Return
18 for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance. The
people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our
19 adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary. We are become
like those over whom thou never barest rule, who were not called

LXIV. 1 by thy name: Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens,
that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might quake
2 at thy presence! As the fire burneth the stubble, as the fire
maketh the water to boil, that thou wouldest make thy name
known to thine adversaries, that the nations might tremble at
3 thy presence! In doing terrible things which we looked not
for, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might
4 quake at thy presence! For since the beginning of the world
men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear: neither hath
the eye seen any God, beside thee, who will do such things for
5 him that waiteth for him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and
worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways:
behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned; we have long
6 continued therein, and shall we be saved? And we are all
as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses as filthy
rags: and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like
7 the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth
upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of
thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed
8 us, because of our iniquities. But now, O Jehovah, thou
art our father: we are the clay, and thou our potter; and
9 we are all the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore,
O Jehovah, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold,
10 see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people. Thy holy cities
are a wilderness: Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desola-
11 tion. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers
praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant
12 things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these

things, O Jehovah? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore.

- LXV. 1 I have answered them that asked not for me; I was at hand for them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me,
 2 unto a nation that called not on my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people; which walketh in
 3 a way that is not good, after their own thoughts: a people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth
 4 in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick: which sit among the graves, and lodge in the monuments; which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their
 5 vessels: which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are smoke in my nose, a fire
 6 that burneth all the day. Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence till I have recompensed, even recompensed into
 7 their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith Jehovah, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills: and I will
 8 measure their former work into their bosom. Thus saith Jehovah, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for
 9 my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my
 10 servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in: for
 11 my people that have sought me. But ye are they that forsake Jehovah, that forget my holy mountain: that prepare a table for Fortune, and that furnish a drink offering unto Destiny.
 12 Therefore I have destined you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.
 13 Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but
 14 ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for
 15 anguish of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; for the Lord Jehovah shall slay thee, and call
 16 his servants by another name: that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth; because

the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; and the sinner an hundred years old shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them: and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer: and while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat: they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith Jehovah.

LXVI. 1 Thus saith Jehovah, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things did mine hand make, and they all were, saith Jehovah: but to this man will I look, to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. Slaying an ox, killing a man; sacrificing a lamb, breaking a dog's neck; offering an oblation, offering swine's blood; burning incense, blessing an idol: yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose to mock them, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

5 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye that tremble at his word: your brethren that hated you, and cast you out for my name's sake, say, Let Jehovah be glorified, and let us see your joy;—but they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of Jehovah, that rendereth recompence to his enemies. Before she travailed, she brought

forth : before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

8 Who hath heard such a thing ? who hath seen such things ? shall a land be brought forth in one day ? or shall a nation be born at once ? for Zion hath travailed and at once brought
9 forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth ? saith Jehovah : shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb ? saith thy God.

10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her : rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her :
11 that ye may suck, and be satisfied, from the breasts of her consolations : that ye may milk out, and be delighted, from the abundance of her glory.

12 For thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like an over-flowing stream : and ye shall suck, ye shall be borne upon the side,
13 and be dandled upon the knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you : and ye shall be comforted
14 in Jerusalem. And ye shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb : and the hand of Jehovah shall be known toward his servants, and his indigna-
15 tion toward his enemies. For, behold, Jehovah will come with fire, and his chariots like a whirlwind : to render his anger with
16 fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will Jehovah plead with all flesh : and the slain
17 of Jehovah shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves, for the gardens, following one in the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall
18 be consumed together, saith Jehovah. For I know their works and their thoughts ; the time cometh that I will gather all nations
19 and tongues : and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory ; and they shall
20 declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto Jehovah, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Jehovah : as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean
21 vessel into the house of Jehovah. And I will also take of
22 them for priests and for Levites, saith Jehovah. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your

23 name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from new
moon to new moon, and from sabbath to sabbath, shall all flesh
24 come to worship before me, saith Jehovah. And they shall
go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have
rebelled against me: for their worm shall not die, neither
shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring
unto all flesh.

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